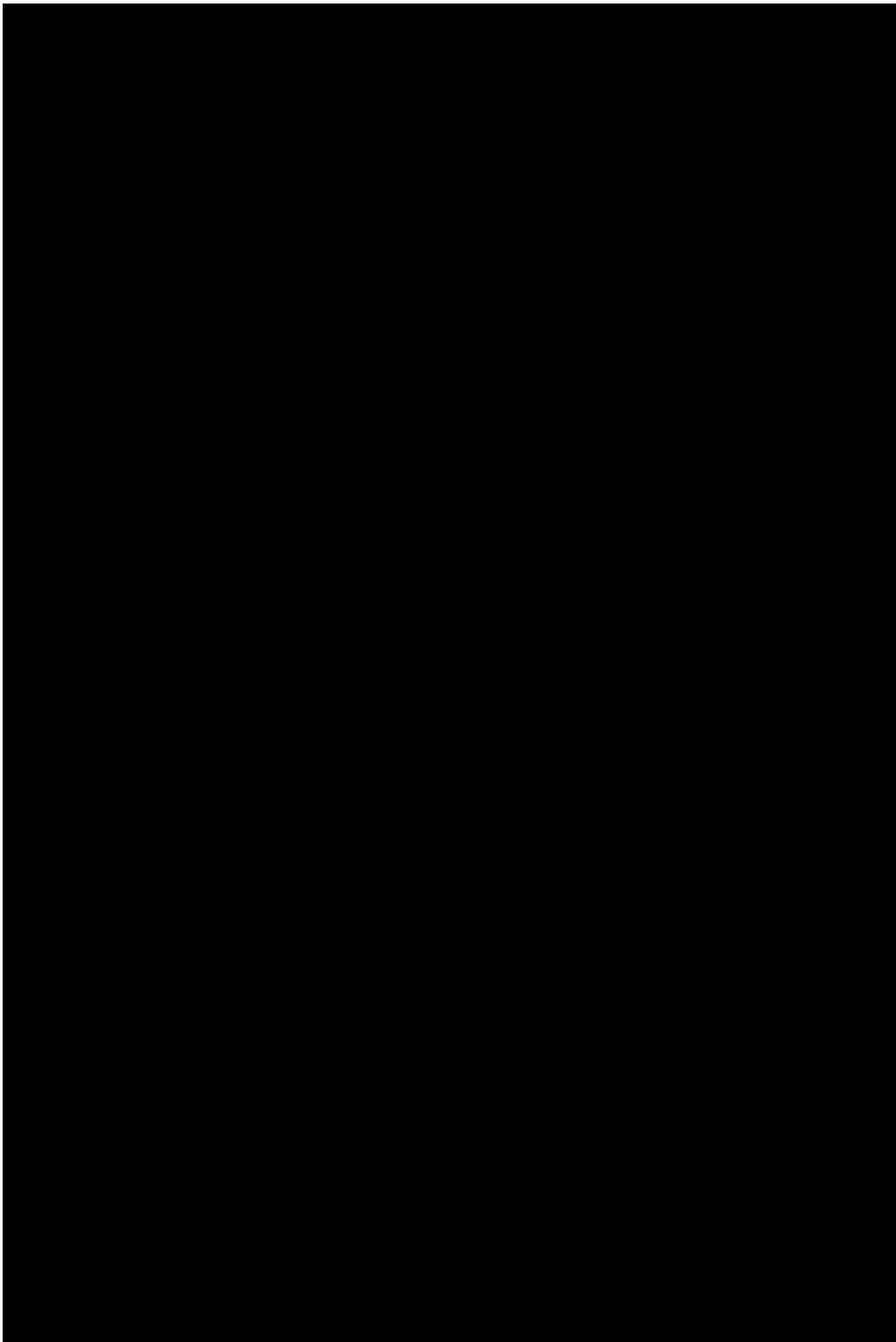
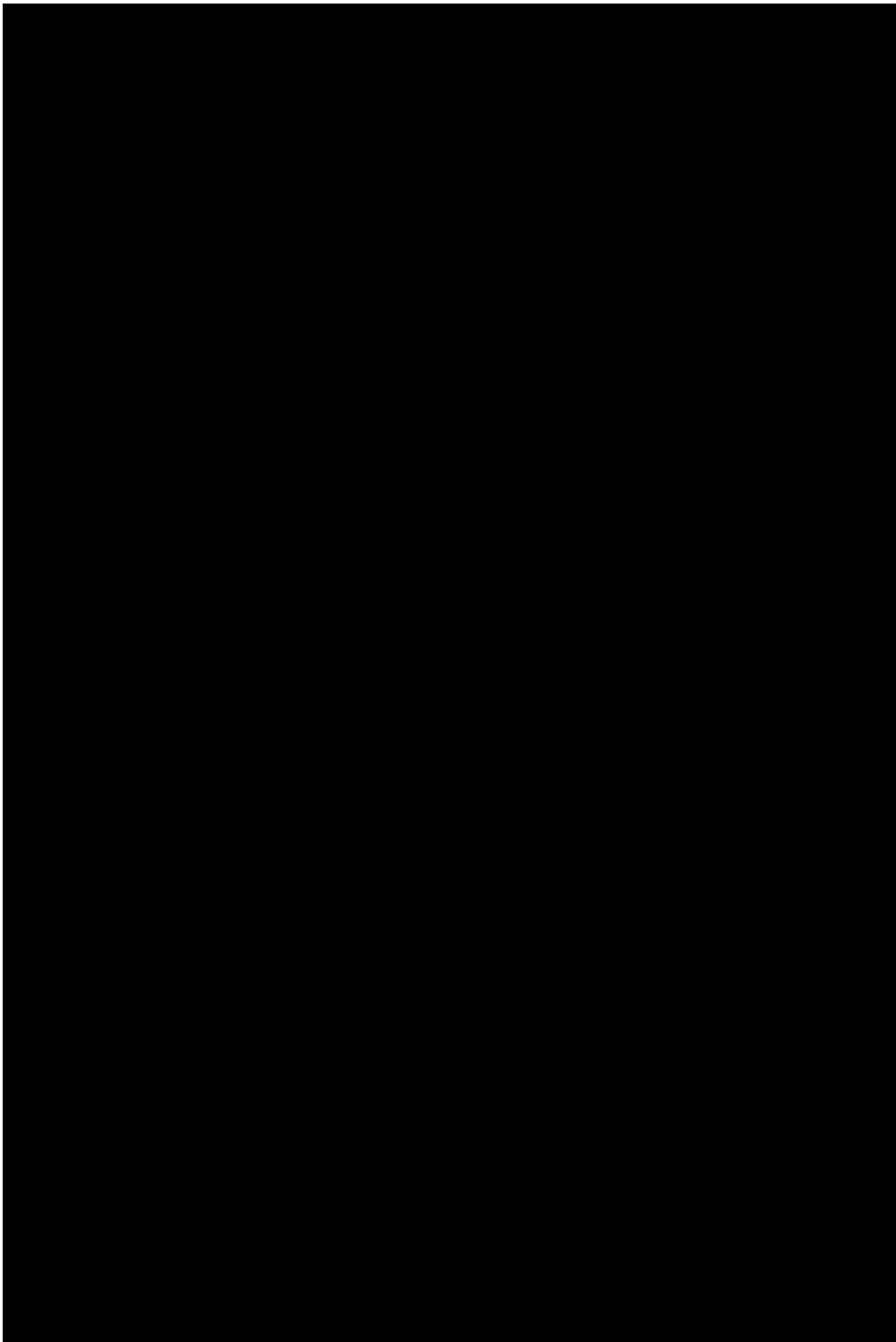
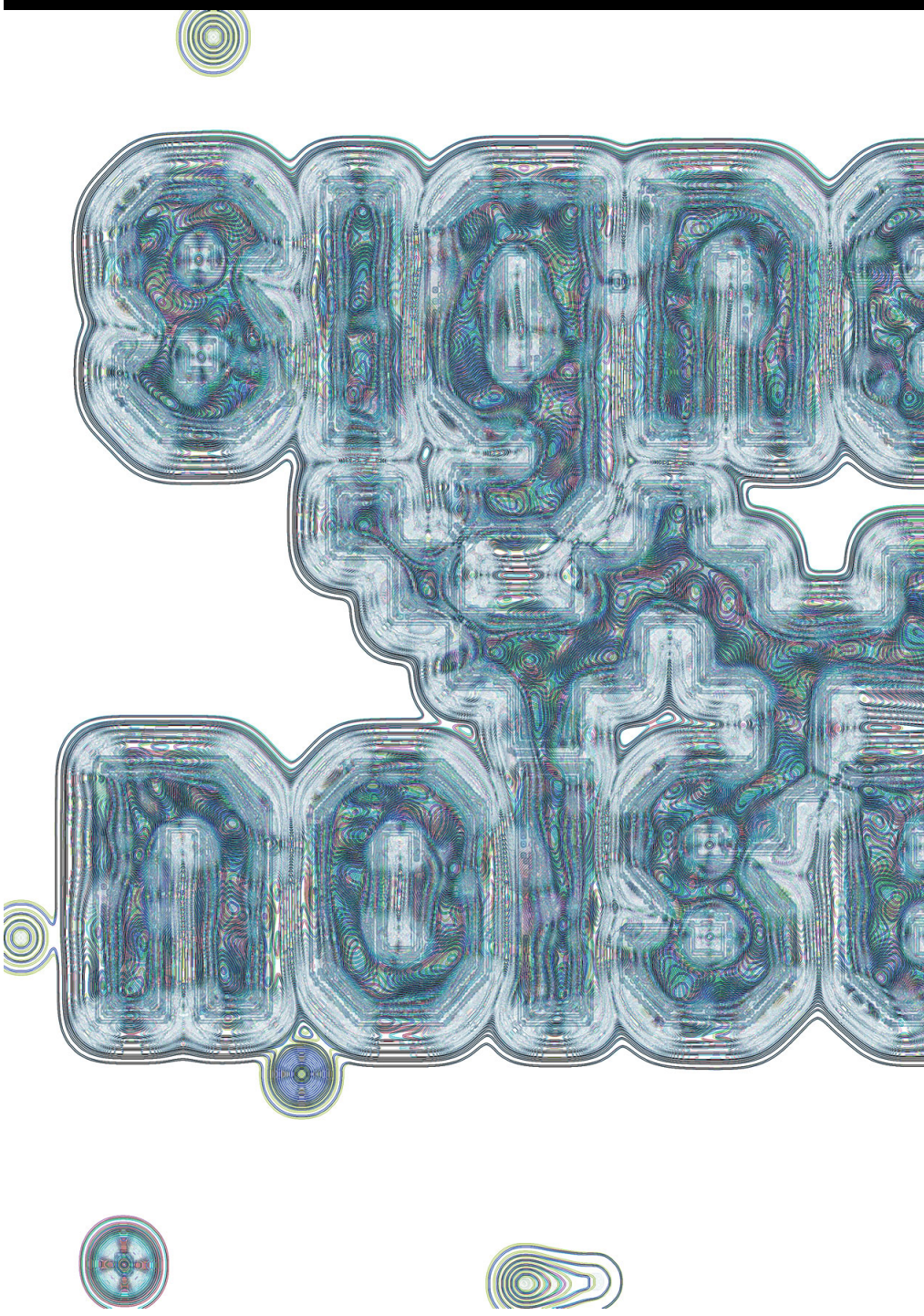
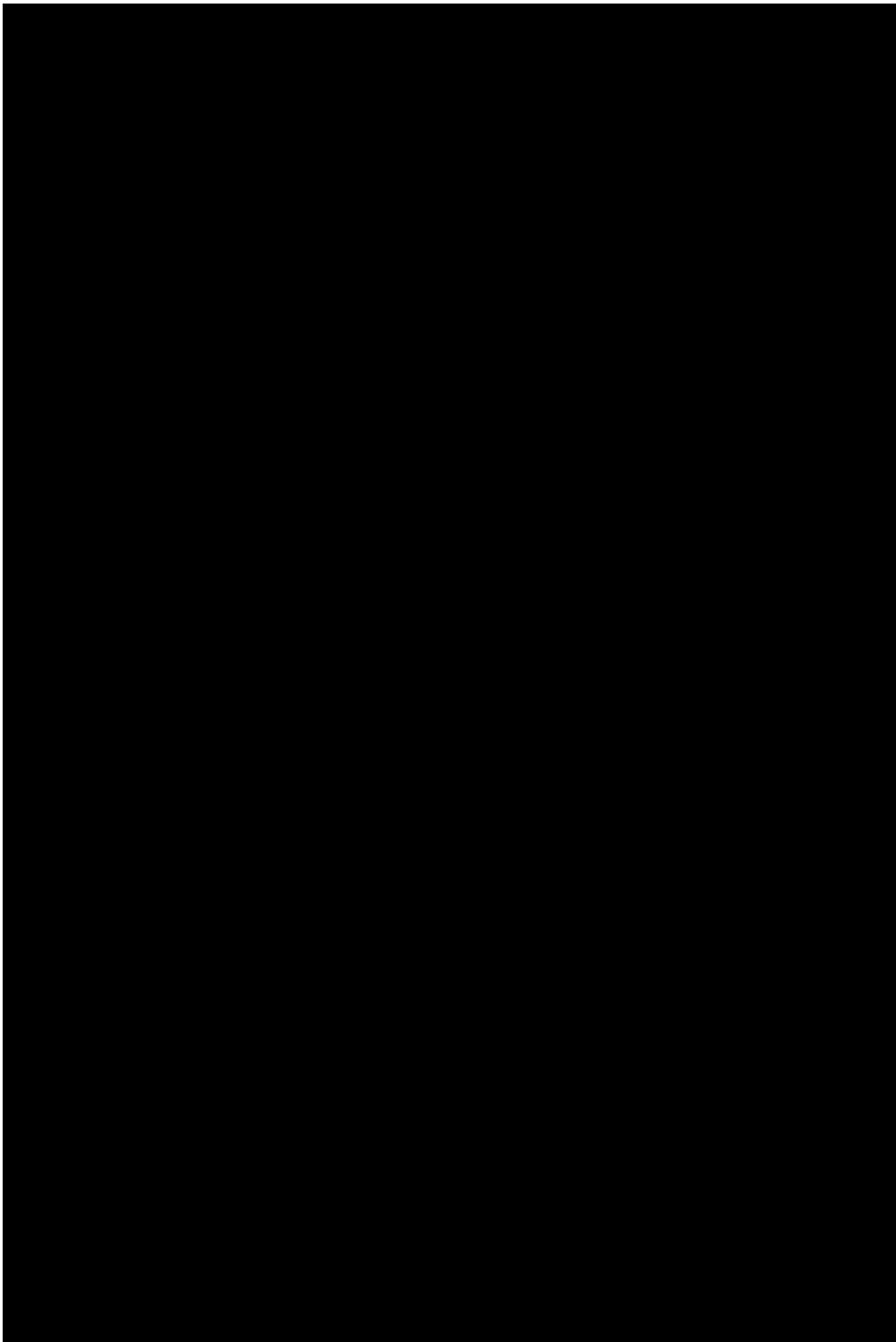
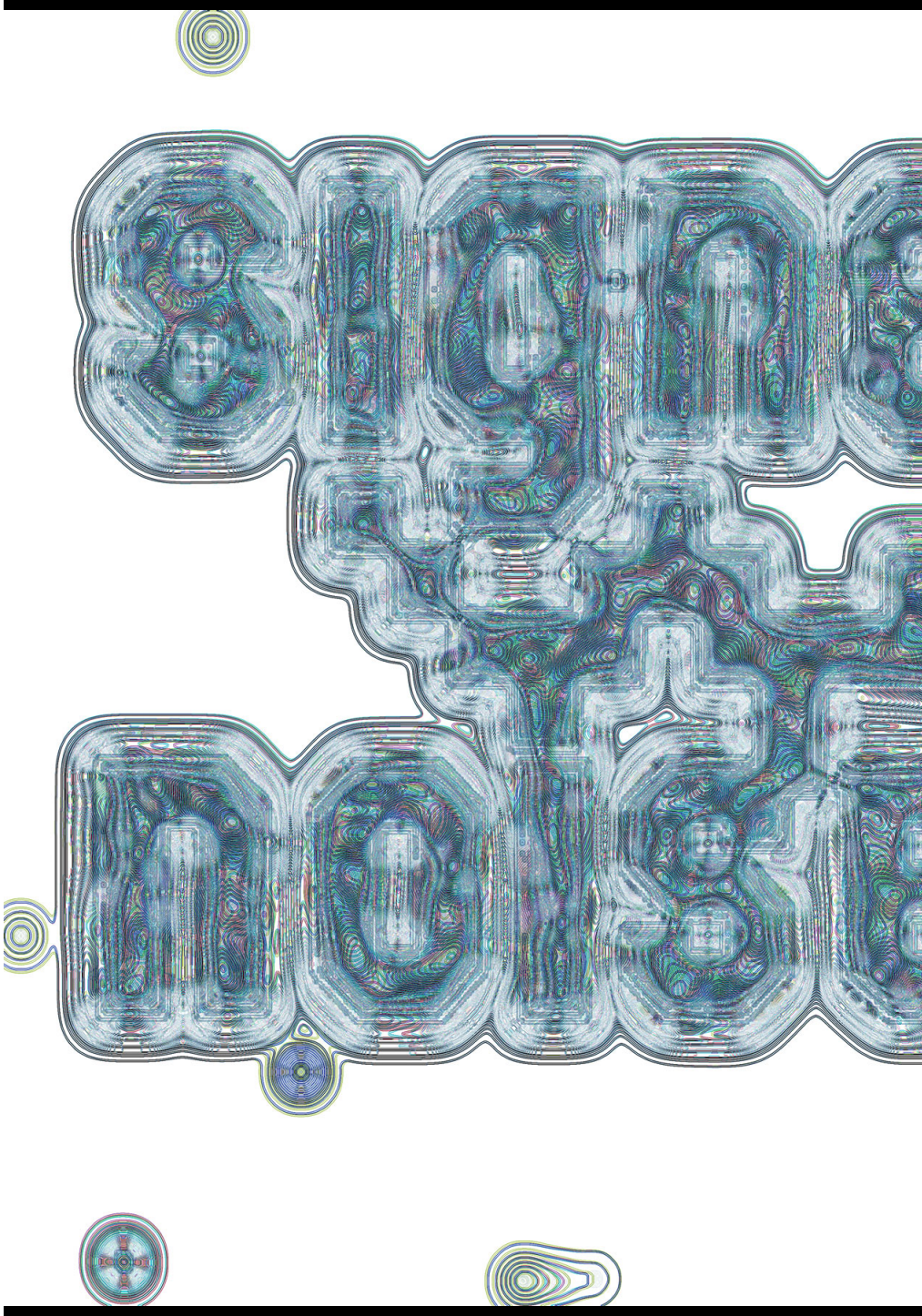
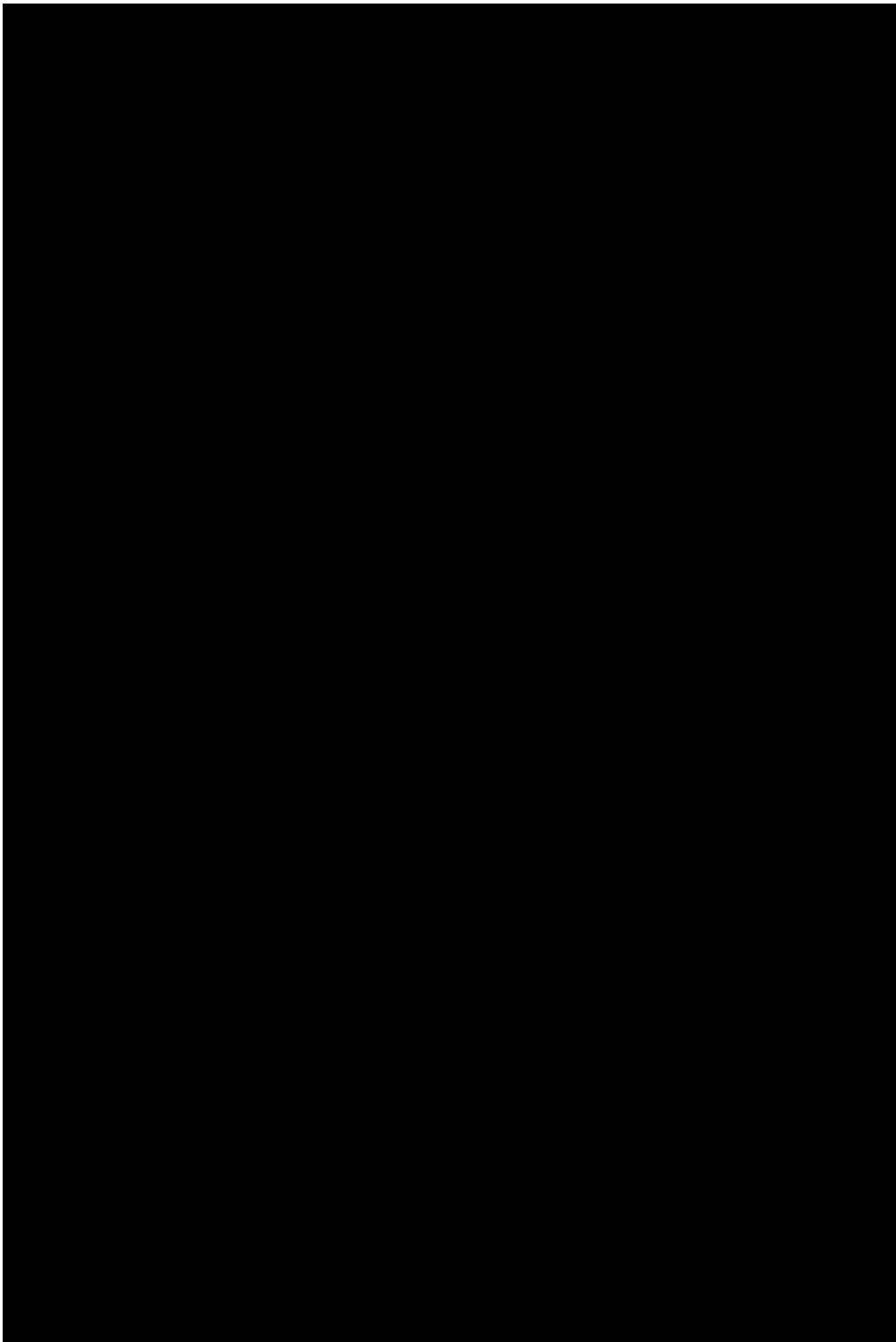


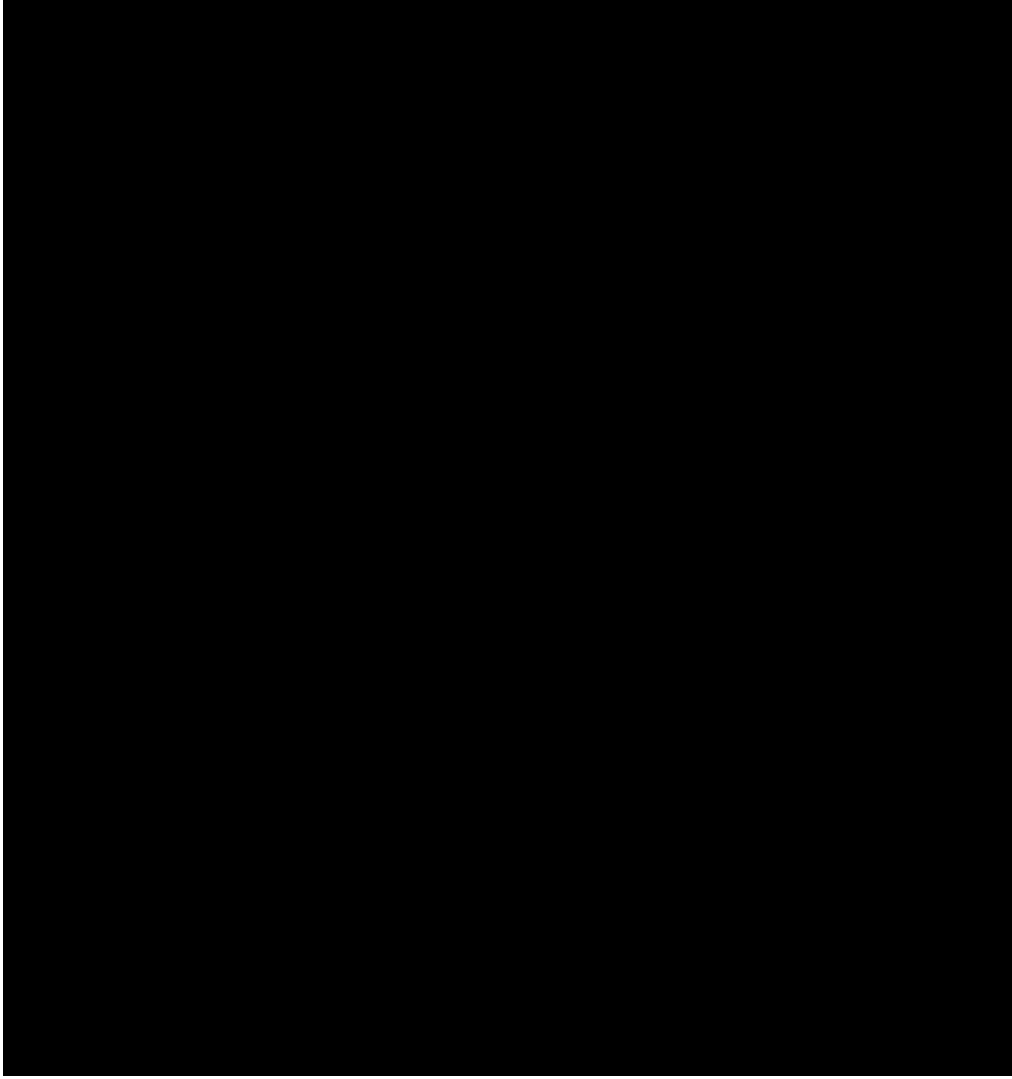


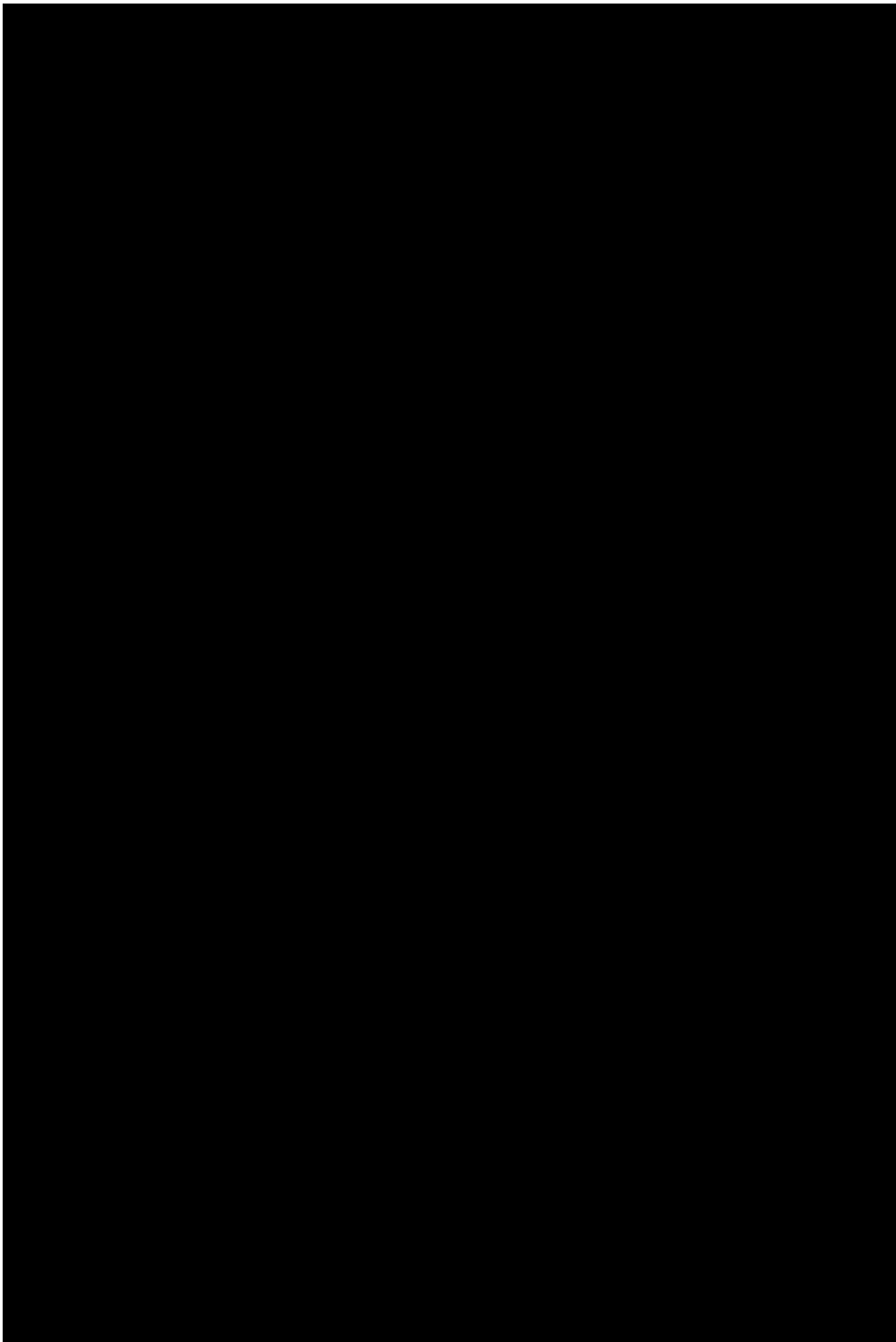










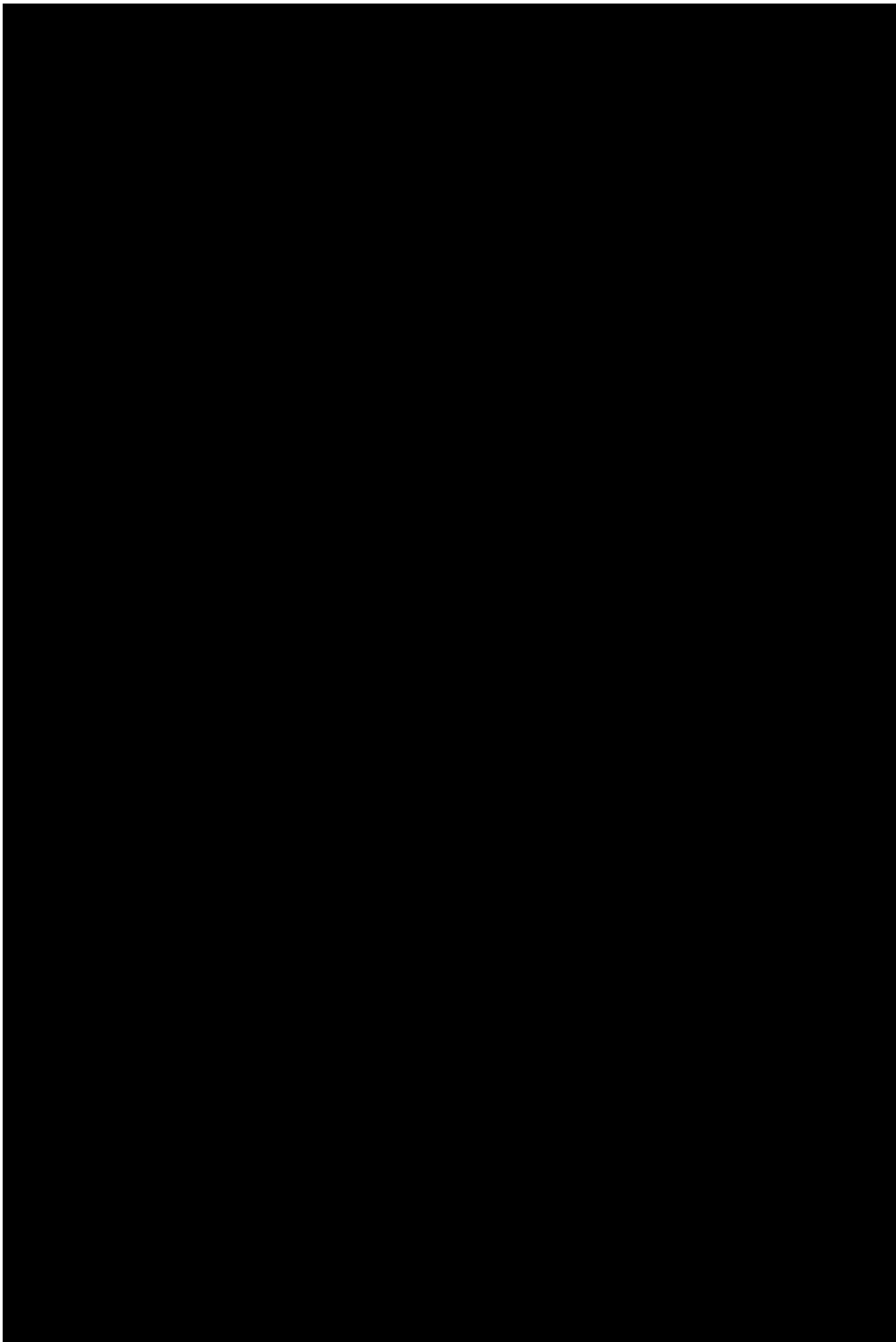


Sunset Blvd

Introduction for the original edition by Jonathan
When I was a teacher, one of the first things I
some perverse reason, the introducer invariabl
you are unfamiliar with because, wonder of wo
Because I have the highest respect for Gaiman
it is only an appreciation of two people who are
Collaborations are difficult and treacherous. M
with the work of these men is both are so goo
To Noise demands the reader take everything i
a kind of hieroglyphics of the now. Compare it
have magic, vision beyond the ordinary.
Vision is the key word here. Not noise. The tit
signals whatsover in it. And even if we were so
the point of a quest if we're unable to recogniz
on learning he has a fatal disease, decides neve
Or the ugly flipside - life's a bitch and then you
The critic Robert Harbison has said, "True gui
had. If you are reading you cannot see, and the
me is that virtuosos like McKean and Gaiman
ultimate 'guidebooks' for our quest and our tim
Much has been written recently about how con
To Noise does not entertain. It scratches, it pr

see the poignance, the beauty of light dancing o
days which unfortunately always smacks to me
a little deeper and come up with a right name f
Because at their best, experiencing these wor
learned of an inner voice which has been talkin
your advantage. Early in this story, a doctor say
Signal To Noise has already begun the treatmen

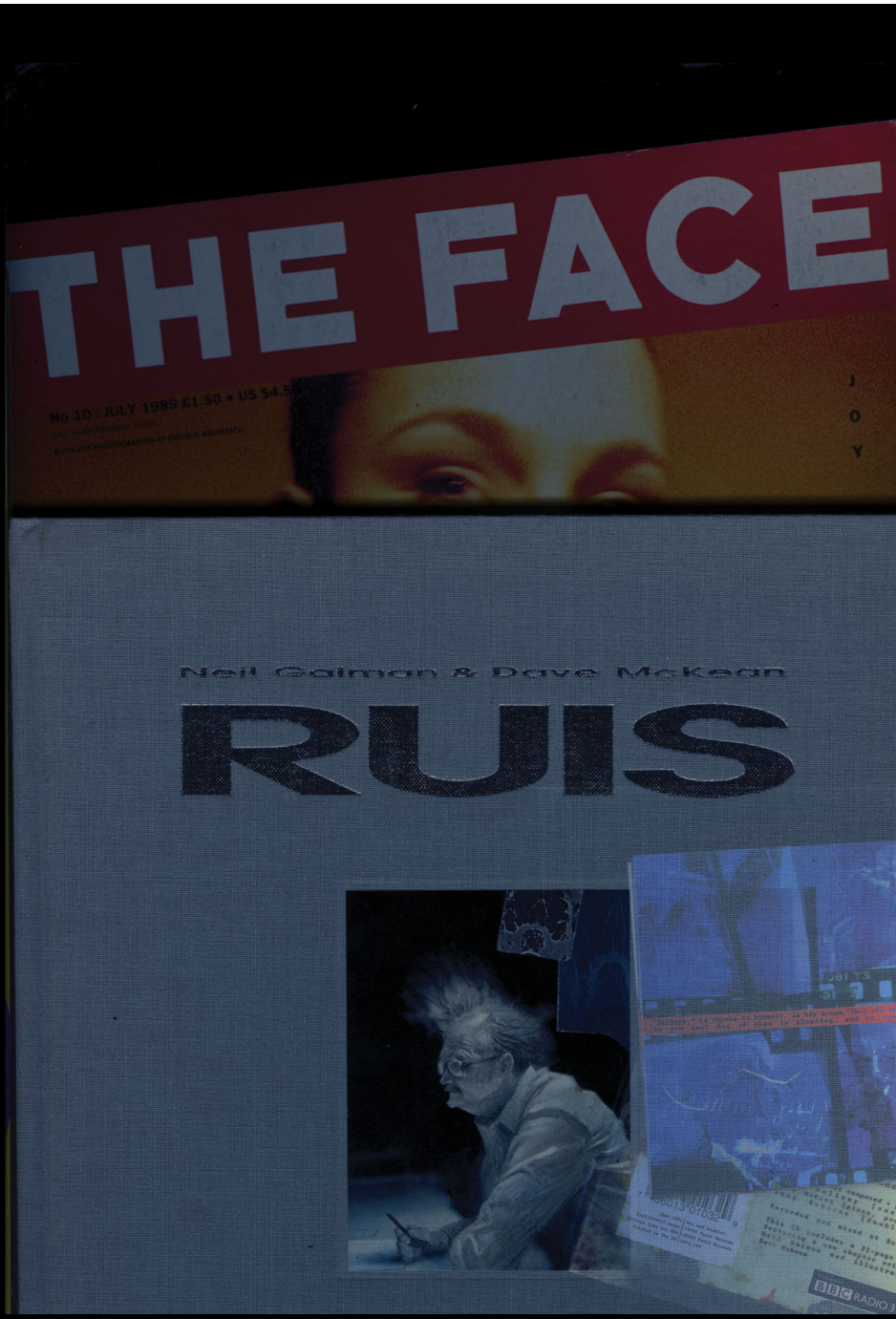
Jonathan Carroll 1992



Signal to Noise has had several lives.
It started as a two-page editorial commission fr
it back together as a fragmented looping monol
The Face was the magazine of '80s, defining th
what does the magazine of the '80s do in 199
commission a complete serialised comics story
twenty-somethings-living-in-London and vaguely
with the future. I had been making notes on th
mythical events that circled around the year 99
groups of people, fundamental religions and ma
And so we had a starting place. A dying filmma
would be up to the reader to work out what w
the noise.
The schedule was pretty hectic. Neil wrote a re
racks on the fourth.
A year later Victor Gollancz offered us the ch
critique of the book from the artist Barron Sto
I also took the opportunity to tidy up some of
we also decided that each chapter needed som
reviewers thought were obscurist rubbish and c
The collected edition was released complete w
Horse, and throughout Europe shortly after tha
Signal then had a virtual life as a possible film pr

But the radio play version remains my favourit
way, in sound. People generally seem to need p
swamps the foreground action, but not only is
the emotion in music. It doesn't need explanat
written a song called 'Signal to Noise'.
I called Iain Ballamy via his agent because I nee
reflected by the piano as well, but Iain played b
lunch we talked about all sorts, and from that
book story and CD cover designs.
I spent the turn of the millennium in New York
this play wasn't available for the public. A few p
I'm pretty sure that Signal's life is not over yet.
perfect medium to express these ideas, then m

Dave McKean, June 2000


THE FACE
No 10 / JULY 1989 £1.50 • US $4.5
J
O
Y
Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean
RUIS
BBC RADIO

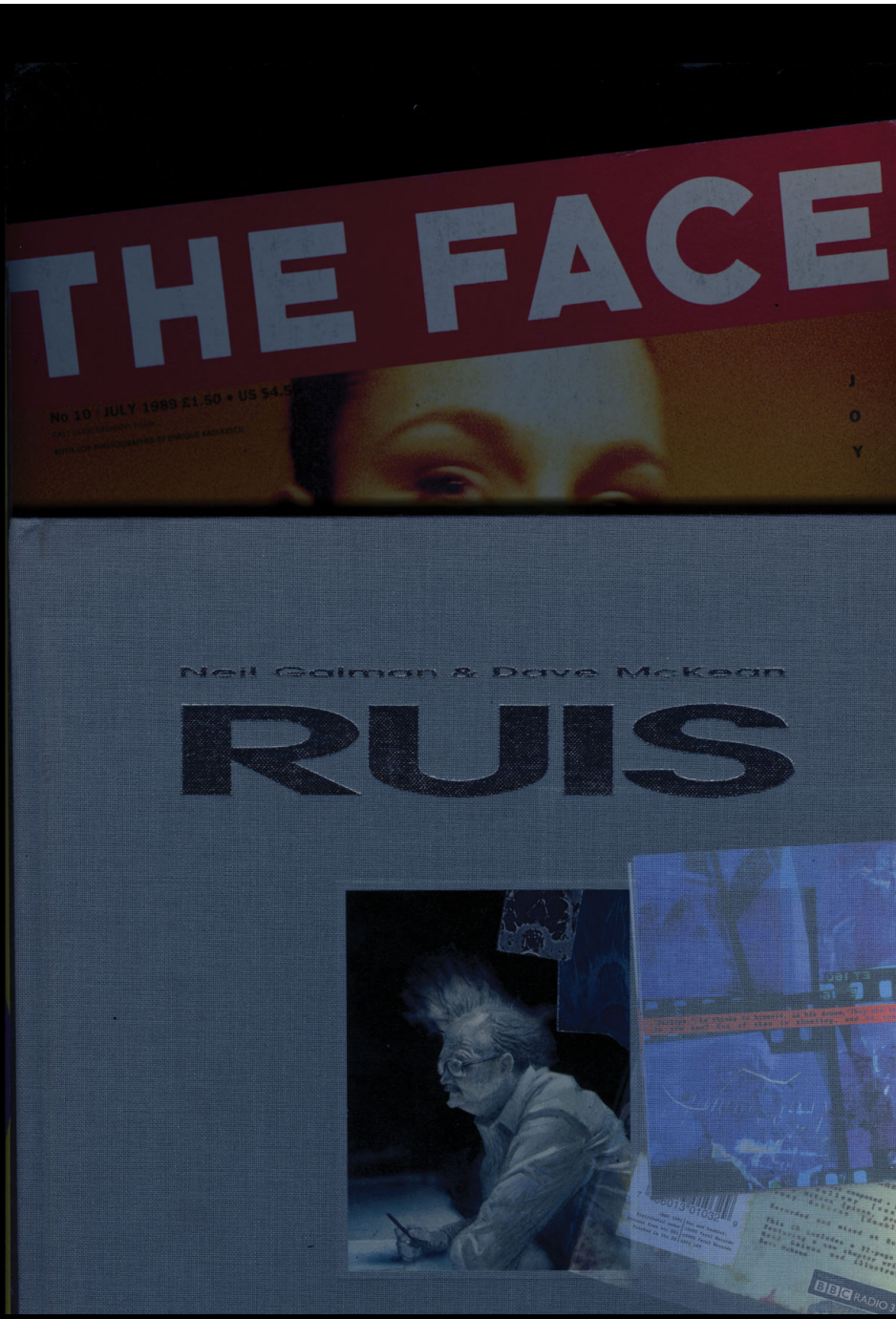
Dave McKean had chicken pox. This would
come to the recording process. He stayed h
I, on the other hand, could turn up and did.
Dave got to dub himself in. I had all the fun
We were in Studio Seven, at Broadcasting H
each with its own individual sound, stairs th
room at back, with audio props they've beer
Anne Edyvean was an inspired and inspiring
put them through in order to create the Ba
for a few seconds here and there of magic.
Warren Mitchell explored the Director, m
'Fillum' so much.
My favourite moment was realising that we
she was in Tibet or somewhere that the BB
I learned the most from?
That was a comment from Anne's on the sc
"You better change that," she said. "Or the s

Neil Gaiman, June 2000

And the signal continues.
In 2000 I released the BBC Radio play versi
and Jan Svankmajer, as well as the films I ha

script.
In 2002, we took the book and an outline t
two days and completed a 12-minute samp
improvised scenes and blurry memories I ha
knowledge of almost everything to the proje
Then, in 2003-2005 I was embroiled in maki
But the post-production process of that film
the daily angst of failing computers, dwindli
suddenly it was about six times broader than
It's now 2006, and Keith and I are approachi
And then there is this new edition, expande
wondering why it all looks slightly different.
from unsold original pages, transparencies, f
Even though its various incarnations tell ba
change depending on my age, state of mind,
When I die, I'll try and leave an alternate fin

Dave McKean, June 2006


THE FACE
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J
O
Y
Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean
RUIS
BBC RADIO

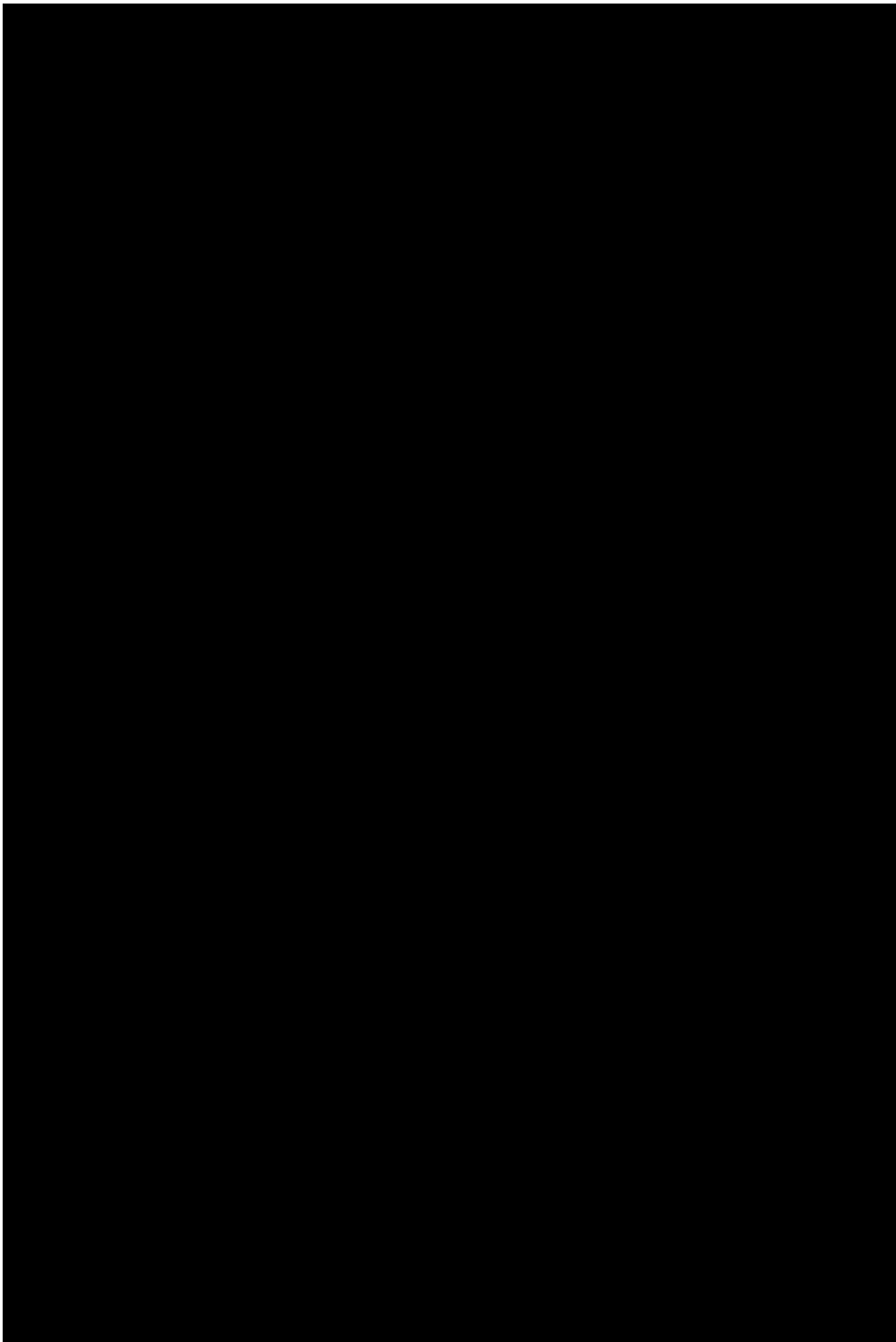
A final dream.

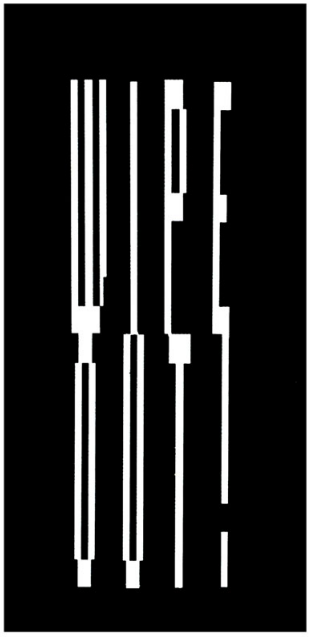
In 1992 when the first collected edition of S
I was in London and decided to drop into th
Everyone was surprised to see me, although
I asked to see the book.
It was a lot bigger than I thought it was goin
I started to look through it.
I couldn't find Signal at first. There were so
what they were, and he told me he'd written
I continued to look for the story I had illust
his office and put in the book.
Finally I found Signal, right at the back of the
Then I closed the book and looked at the co
Neil told me his young son, Mike, had done
I woke up.
This carried on for a few weeks.

So.
I have included three short stories at the
commissioning Signal to Noise. 'Deconstruc
was done for an international book of stor
shares similar images and aesthetics.

I didn't include my old Green Hornet strips. Sorry.

Dave McKean, August 2006





everybody should be able to understand the moment they sit down

There should be no mystery, obfuscation deception cept i cation protection,

protection,

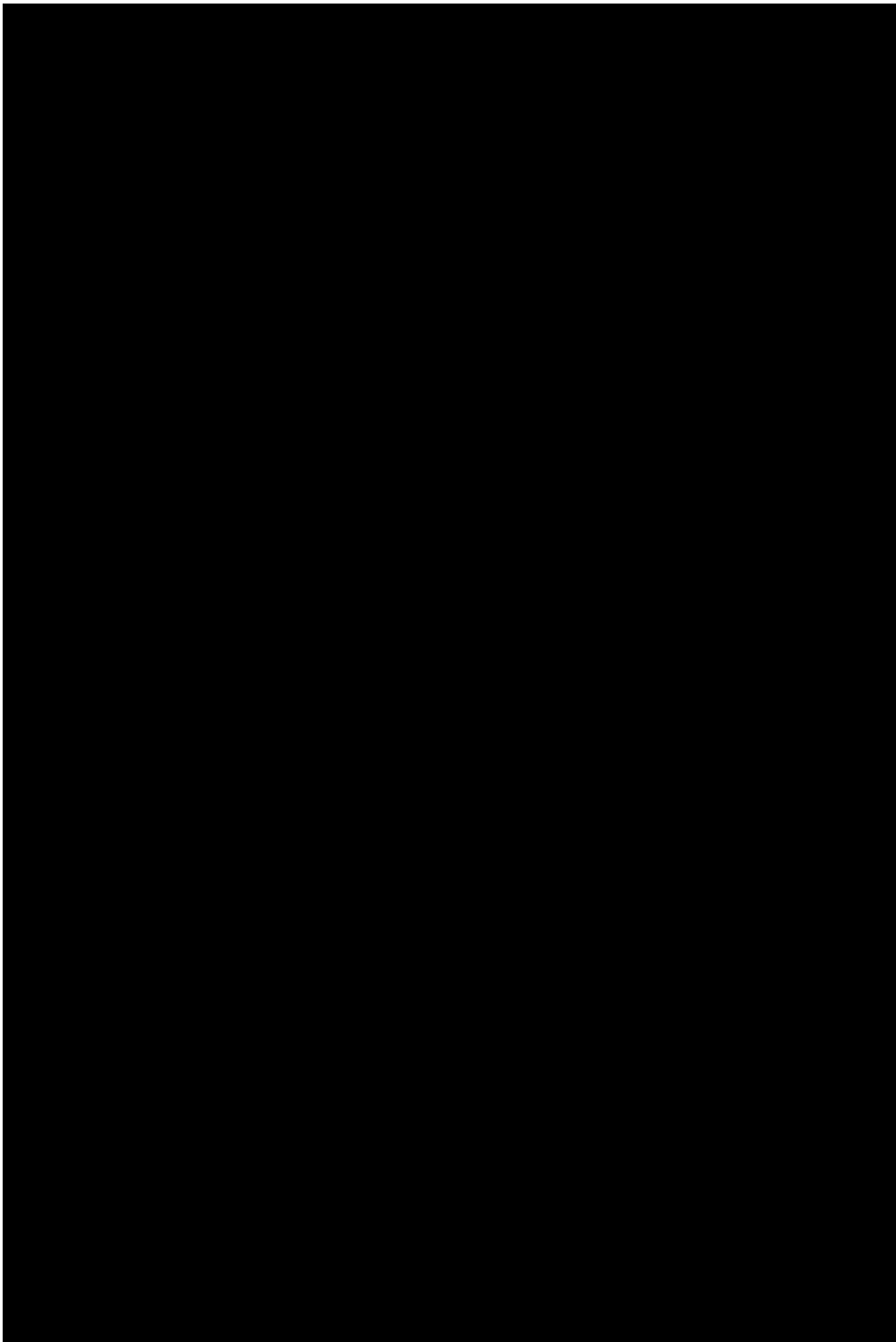
no protection,

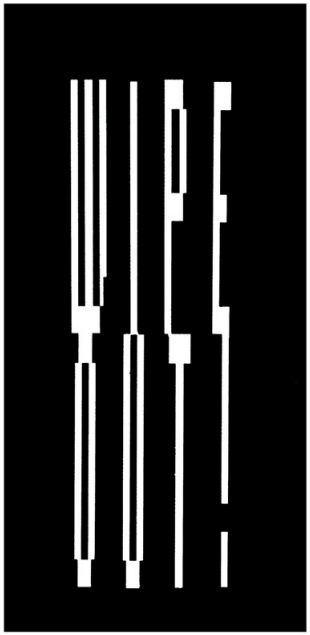
That's ambiguous.

That's what the fight is about.'

GAULOISES
GAULOISES
GAULOISES

by Dave McKean 1989
Originally published in THE FACE





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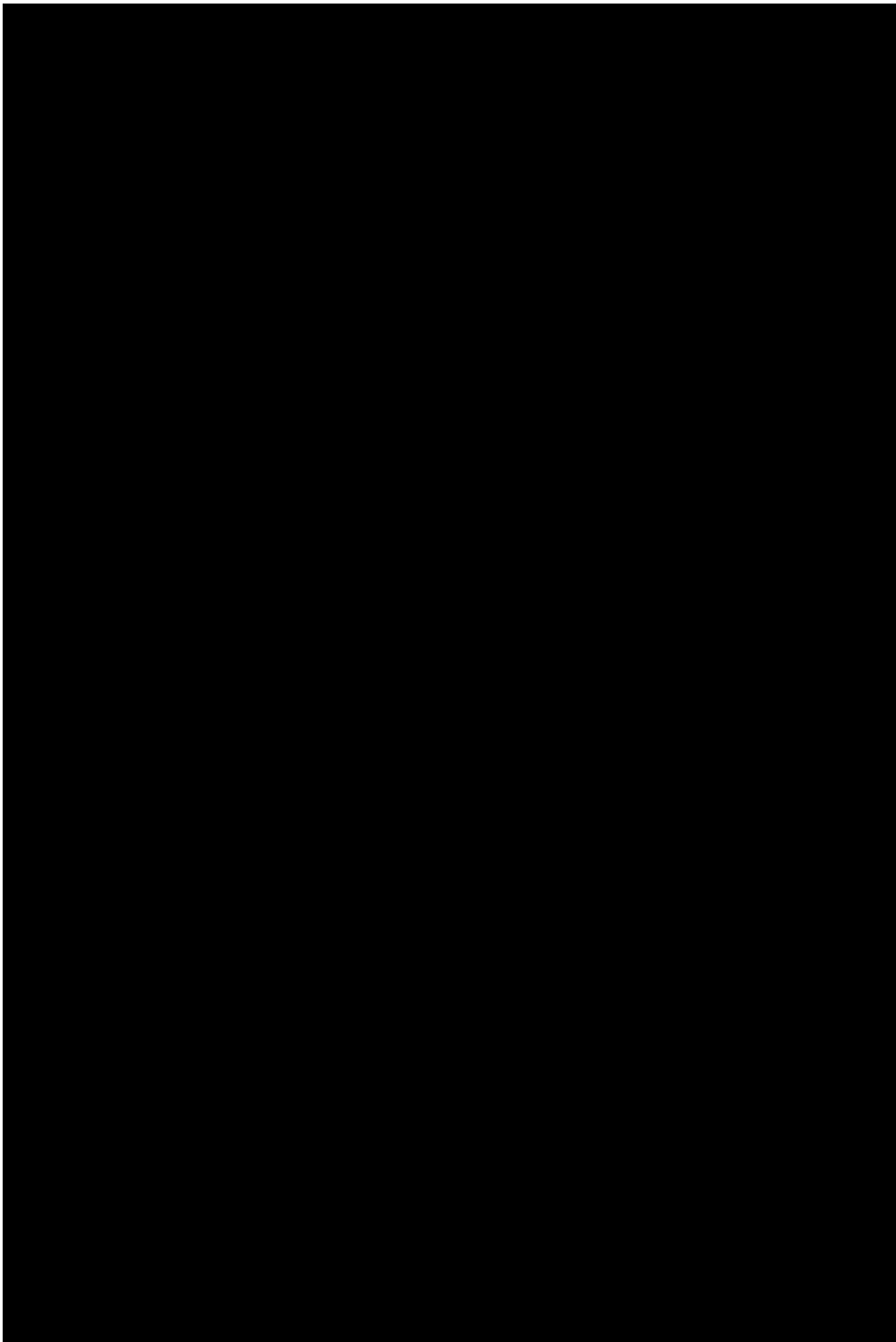
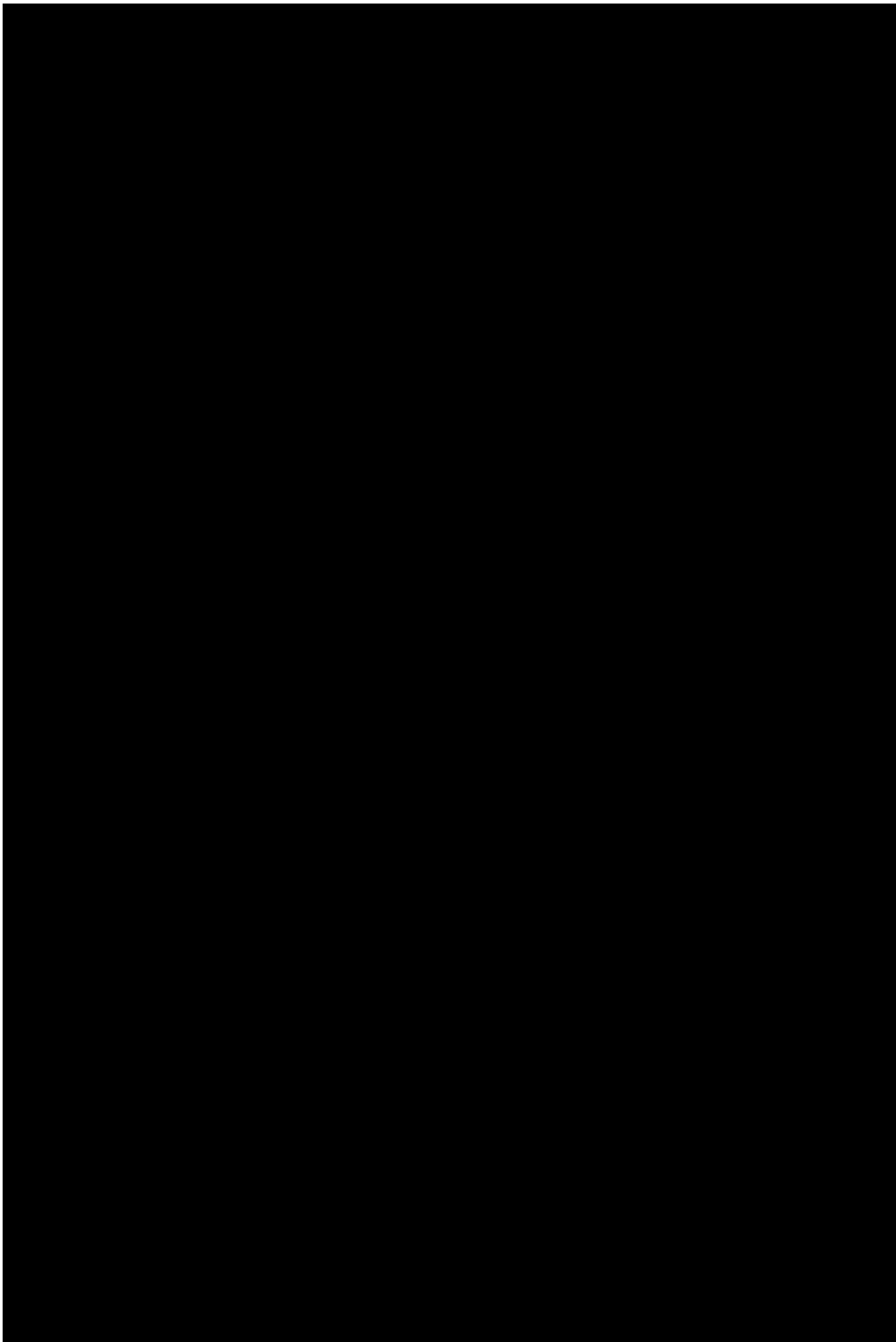


deconstruction

by dave mckean
first published 1990
instant magazine
germany

the night is a rook's feather
folded into its side
a common bird
light falling into it
the moon is a white stain
the sky pouring water
smears the light
clouds falling through it
the window casts a shadow
colours everything in its path
sledgehammer symbolism
falling out the back of his head
the man doesn't know what to think
tries to write poetry, marks on paper
a small conceit
forever falling



V

IER
MAURN

An illustrated text by
Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean

First published in Breaththrough, 1990.

OPENING.

"Something there is that does not love a wall."

Robert Frost said that, but he also suggested, in the same poem, 'Mending Wall', that "Good fences make good neighbours", so what did he know?

THE FIRST WALL.

I wonder who bult the first wall. What was in his mind. Or her mind. Protection? Privacy? Or something else.

We build our civilisations with walls,

giving us shelter and stronghold.
Keeping out ‘the other’: the elements,
wild beasts, people who are different.
Walls define us, as they divide us.

Walls separate people; and not just the
walls we build. Perhaps the walls we
have to be scared of most are the ones we
can’t see, that we simply believe in.

THE SECOND WALL.

I had a dream about that when I was small.

In my dream there was one note, one musical
one, one sound; and when it sounded all the
walls everywhere came crumbling down. And
all the people everywhere saw...

They saw each other, doing all the things that
people do behind walls. Nobody had anywhere
to hide anymore.

I woke up then, so I never knew if it was a good
thing or a bad thing, not having any walls. Not
having anywhere to go and hide, and being
able to go everywhere; no pretending, no
protection, no secrecy.

THE THIRD WALL.

They tell me the Great Wall of China is the only human a
can be seen on the Earth from space.

I've never seen the Earth from space. I don't know anyon

I've only ever seen pictures.

They tell me that when you get that high, it's hard to tell
from another. You'd think they'd be coloured in, like on
we had at school.

So you could tell.

THE FOURTH WALL.

When I heard the Berlin Wall was coming down, my first
relief; but then I thought, what if there was a young wom
- half her life - painting something on the wall?

Painting a message, or a picture.

If every morning she got up early, and went out and pain
lines on the wall. Every day. in the rain, or the cold, some
It was her cry against oppression. Her protest against the

She almost finished when they pulled it down.
People could come and go as they wished. The wall she'd

against was gone, as was her creation, split into art-sized
private collector...

I wonder how she felt. I hope she wasn't disappointed.

I would have been.

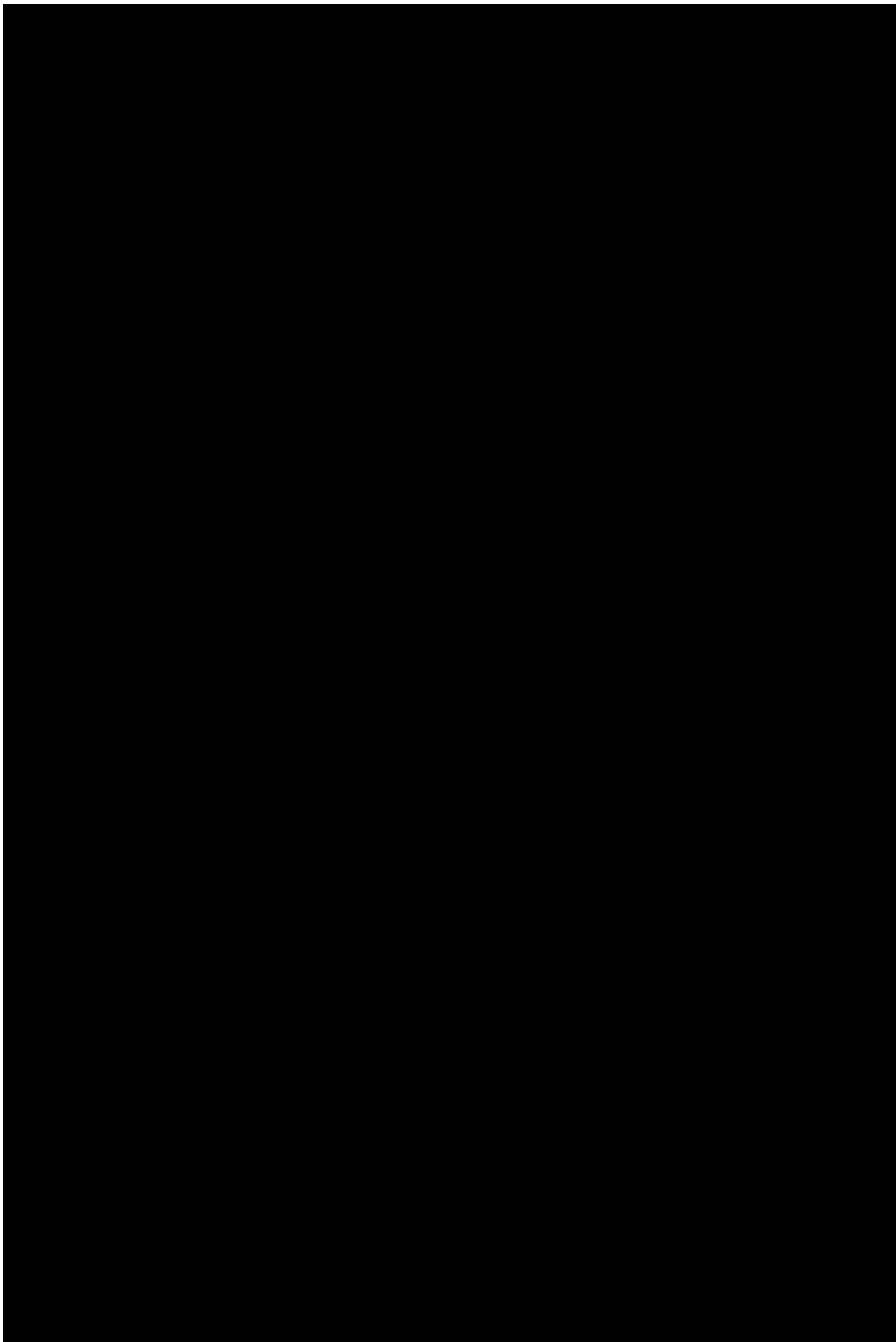
CLOSING.

Maybe we should look beyond the walls.

Listen: painters and writes and music-makers and film-m
ones who paint graffiti slogans that blossom like bright f
sides of derelict buildings - all of you.

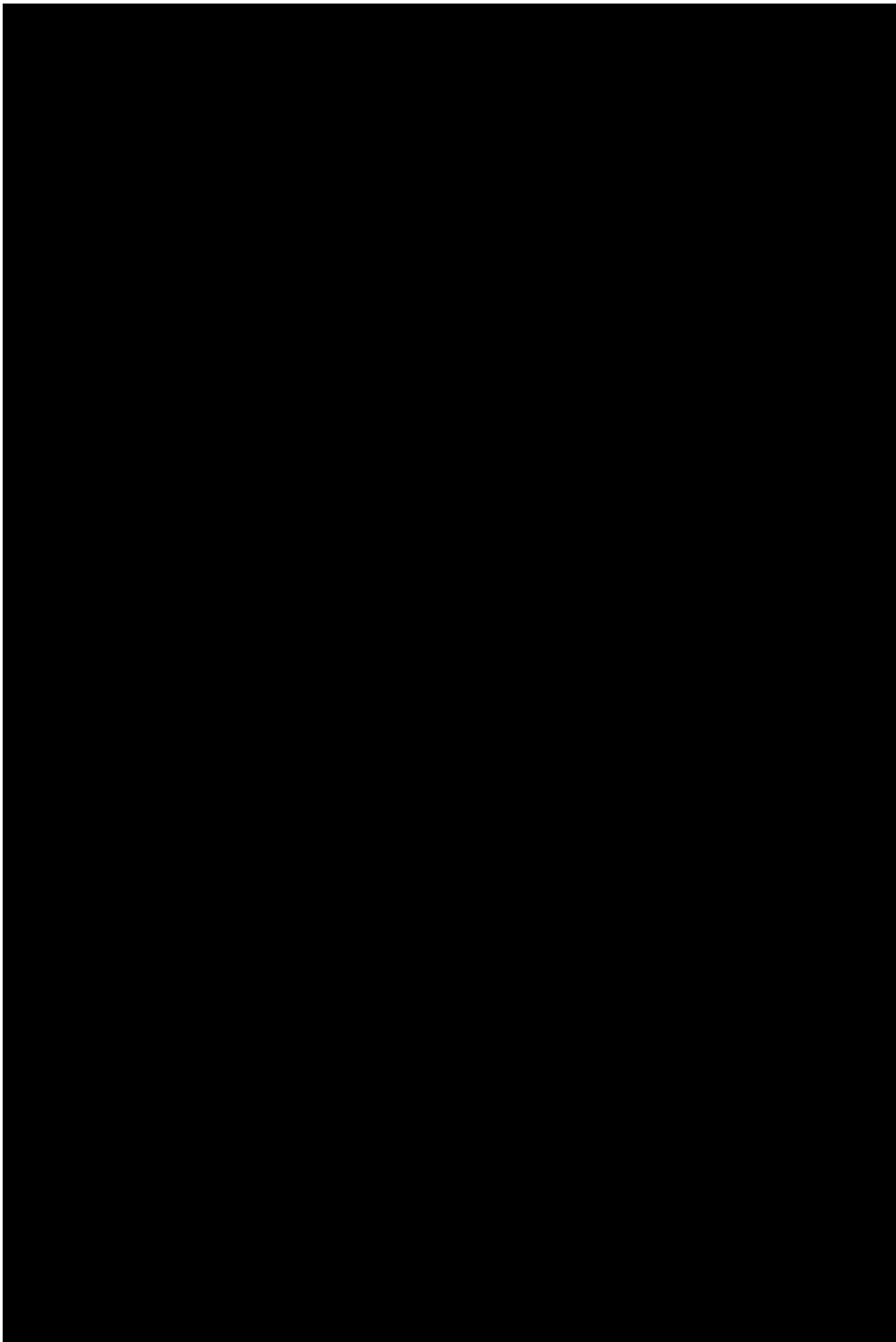
There's a fourth wall that needs to be broken down.
Governments and official voices point out forever that g
good neighbours, and tighten the border controls in an e
happy where we are.

But something there is that does not love a wall, and it's



"Everything has a meaning, or nothing has. To put it another way, one could say that art is without noise."

Roland Barthes. Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative. from Image. Music. Text.



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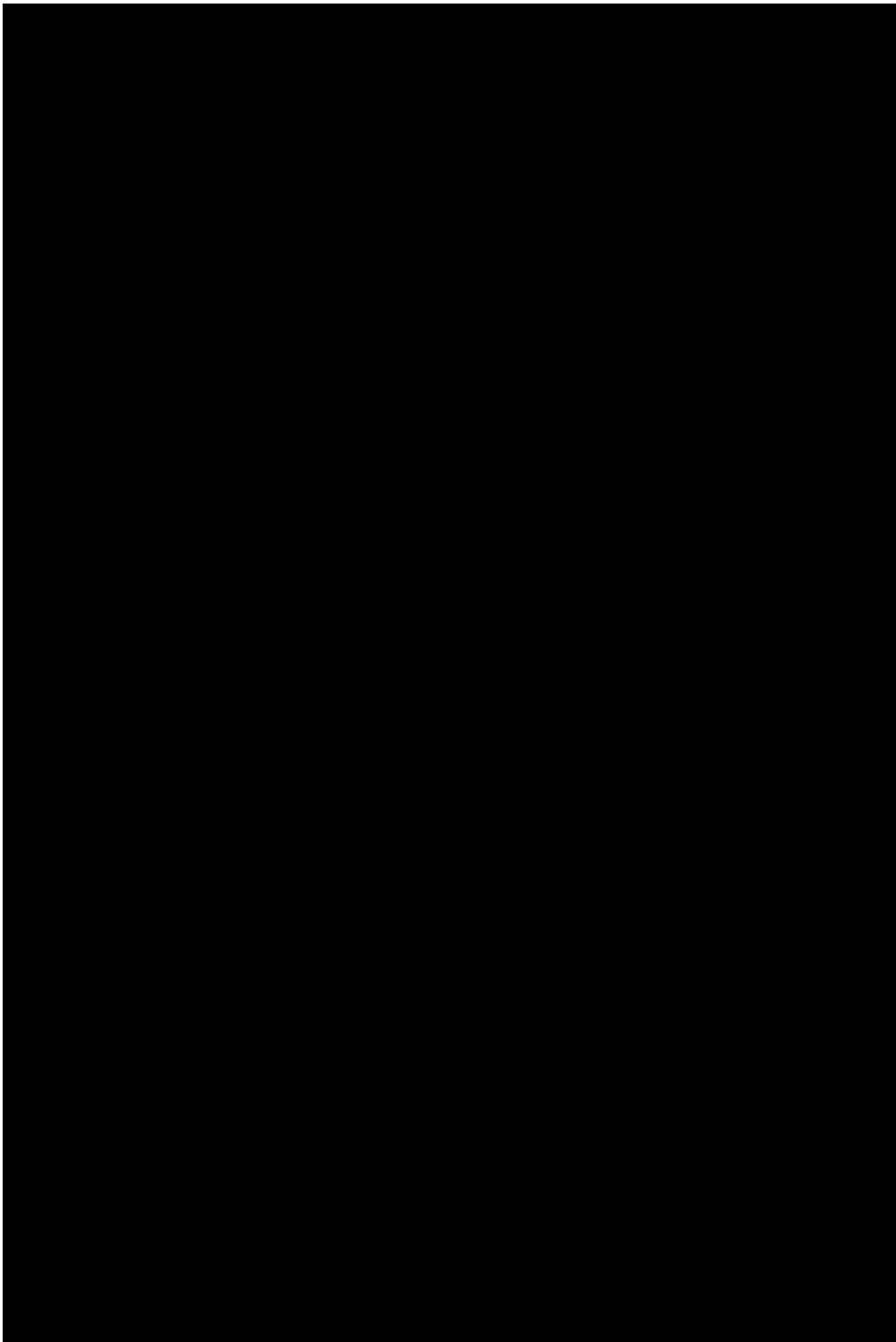
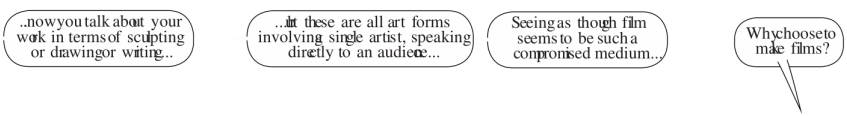
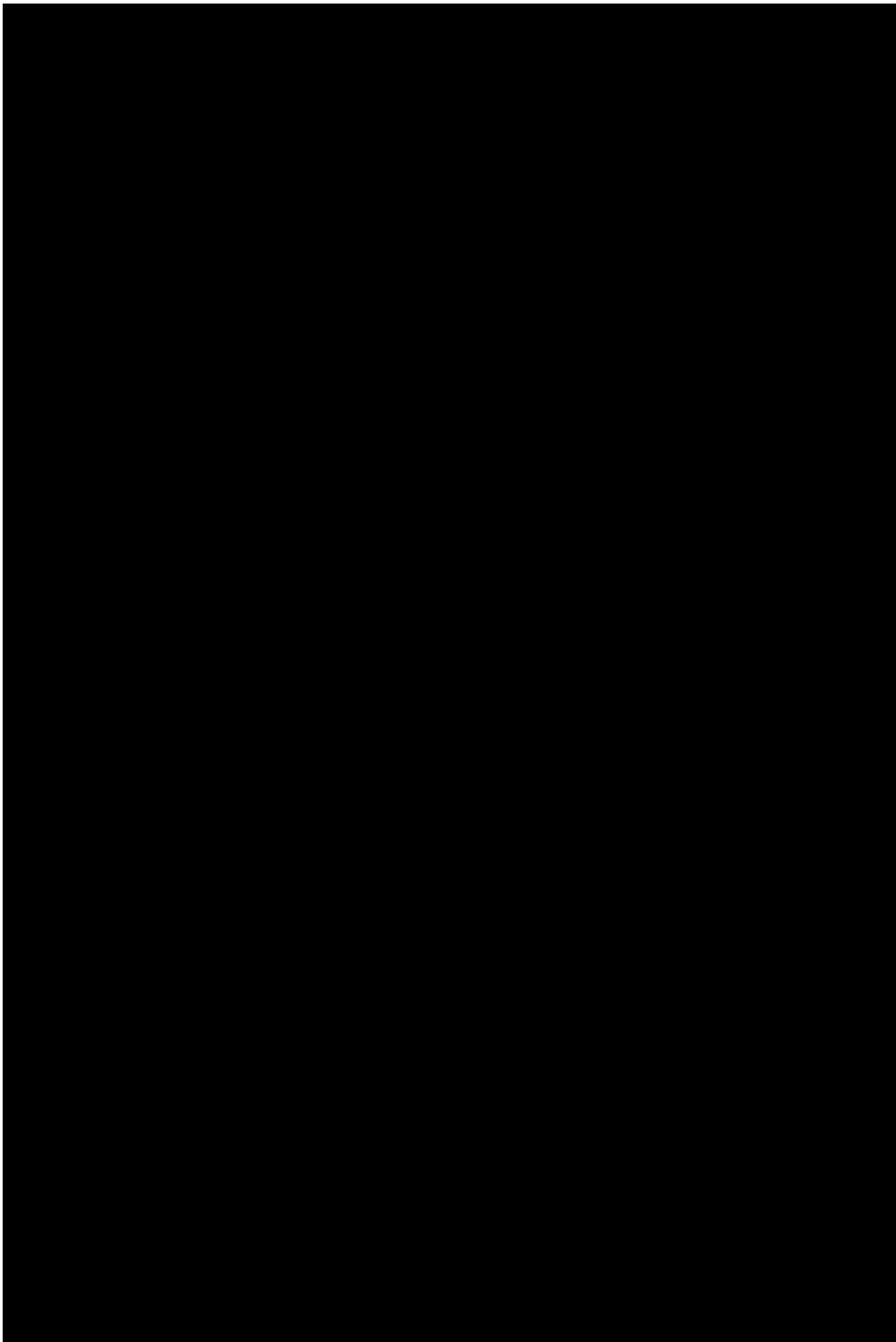
WRITTEN BY NEIL GAIMAN ILLUSTRATED AND

1. PRELUDE



Perhaps they are
looking at the sky.
There, do you see?
One of them is shouting...
...and we cannot hear the words.
Perhaps they are preparing to
leave everything they own.
Perhaps they are beginning,
slowly and truly beginning
to believe…

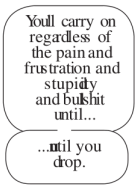

..now you talk about your work in terms of sculpting or drawing or writing...
...but these are all art forms involving single artist, speaking directly to an audience...
Seeing as though film seems to be such a compromised medium...
Why choose to make films?

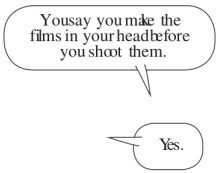


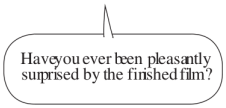
Erm...
Yes.

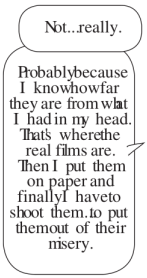
Simply put,
I don't have
a choice.

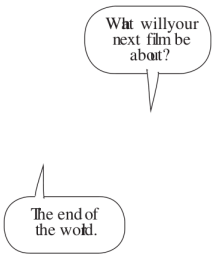
I mean, I sketch and paint occasionally, but film is an obsession.
When you're driven to do something, there's no choice involved.

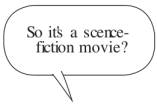

You'll carry on regardless of the pain and frustration and stupidity and bullshit until...
...until you drop.

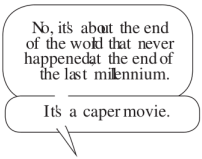

Yousay you make the films in your headbefore you shoot them.
Yes.


Haveyou ever been pleasantly
surprised by the finished film?

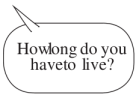

Not...really.
Probablybecause I knowhowfar they are from what I had in my head. That's wherethe real films are. Then I put them on paper and finallyI haveto shoot them.to put themout of their misery.

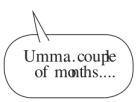

What will your next film be about?
The end of the world.


So it's a science-fiction movie?


No, it's about the end of the world that never happened at the end of the last millennium.
It's a caper movie.

No, I'm kidding.
No capers.
Yes?


Howlong do you
haveto live?


Umma. couple
of months....

Uhh!

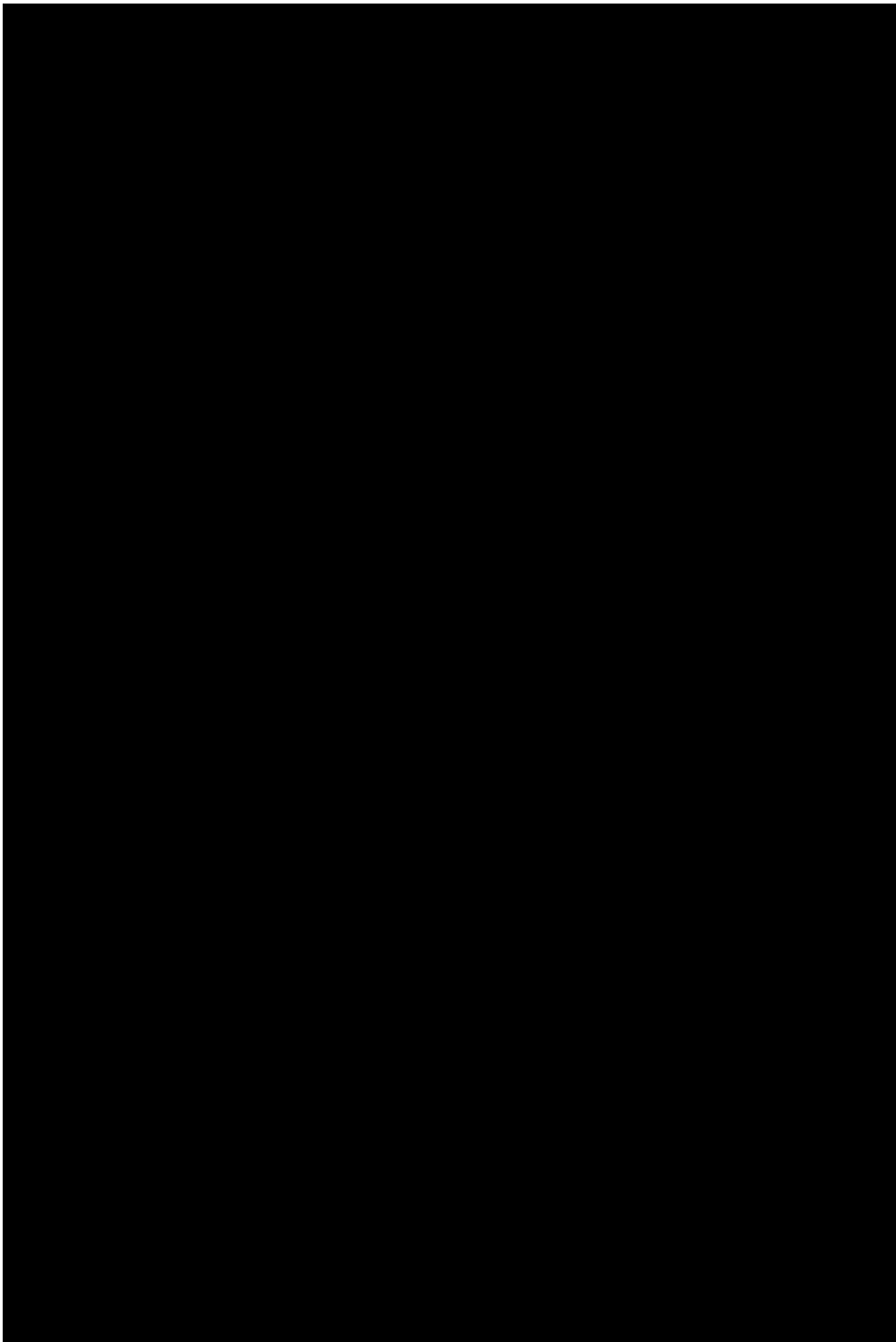
Shit.

It's early evening and I'm covered in sweat,
and I'm shivering, and my chest hurts.

The phone is ringing and the machine gets it,
but it crackles and it sounds like somebody's
talking from a long, long was away.

Noise on the line.

"Hello…? It's Julia. Look, if you're there,
pick up the phone. No? Well, listen to me,
and I'm talking as a friend, not as your
doctor. I know you wouldn't let us do a
biopsy, but you've got to let us examine
you - you've got to let us treat you…"



Mortality is a hard
thing to face.
“That which doesn’t kill us
makes us stronger.“ That's as
may be. But that which does
kill us, kills us, and ain't that
a bitch…

How do you make sense of
your life?

Signal to noise:

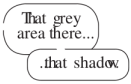
What’s signal? What’s noise?

Say, for example,
you’ve been sent to
your doctor for a ‘full
medical’, lots of pissing
in jars and trying not to
flinch at the needles.

A week later she phones
you back, asks you to
come see her.

There, do you see?

Erm...

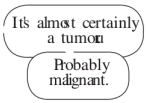

That grey
area there...
.that shadow

It's all shadows

No...just there.

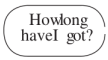
Yes, I suppose...

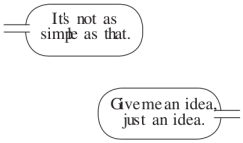
What does it mean?

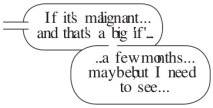

It's almost certainly a tumor.
Probably malignant.

I see.

Obviously well need to do more tests, but...


Howlong
havel got?


It's not as simple as that.
Give me an idea, just an idea.

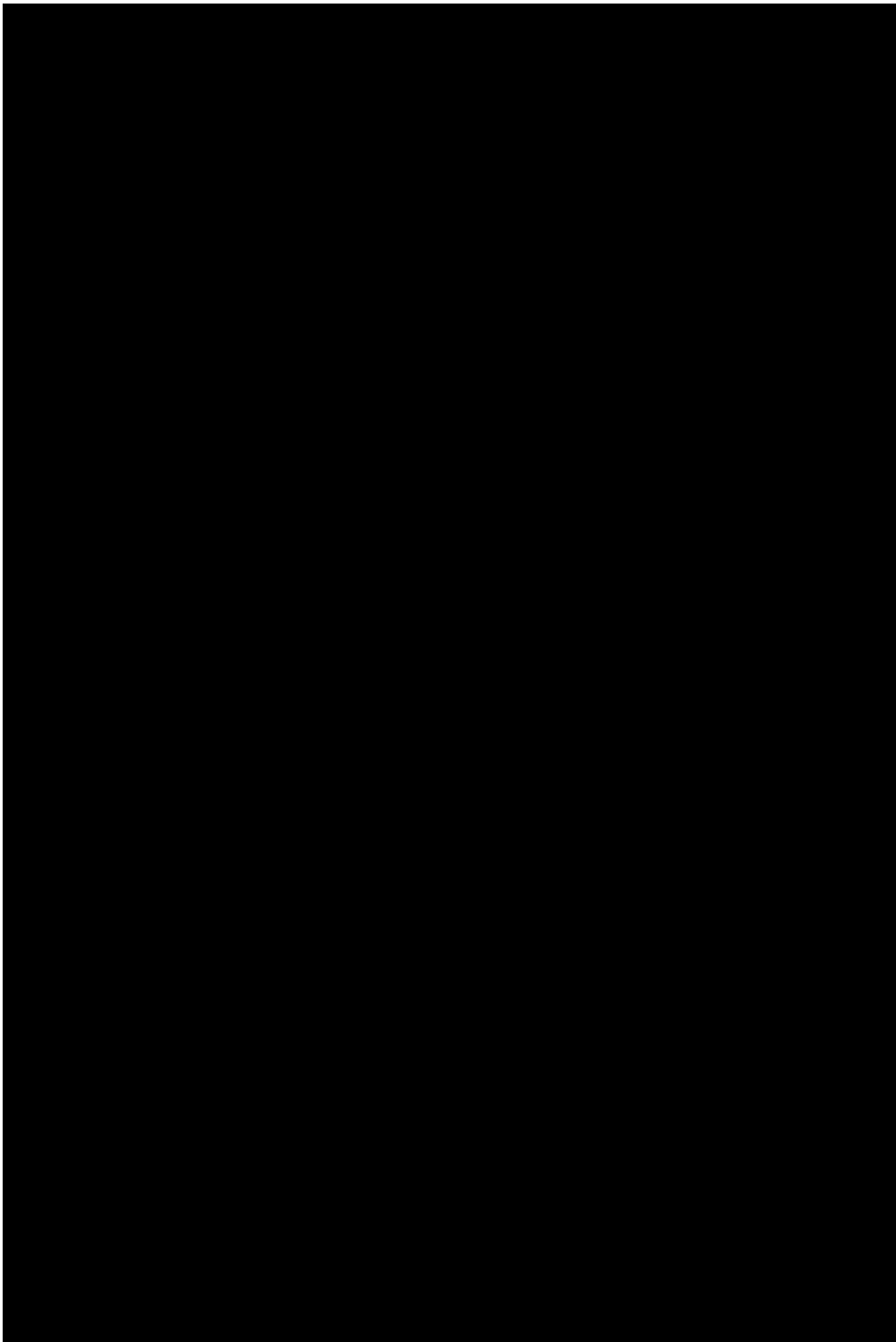

If it's malignant...
and that's a big if'...
...a few months...
maybe but I need
to see...

No.

And I went home.

I’ve been doing a lot of reading.

Watching TV late at night,
when there’s nothing on,
and the repetition of
the adverts becomes
a mantra, a refrain,
singing images
held in time.



I'm making a film in my head.

Assembling the actors.

Setting up the shots.

I'm not writing anything down.

Anno Domini 999, the last day
of the last month of the year.

It's winter in middle Europe
(I have left the place
unspecified); a small town in
the shadow of a mountain.

We pan in slowly: it's like an
ants' nest, as they run in circles
gathering up their possessions,
food, children.

We see their faces (rich,
poor, old, fat, mad).

Some stand and scoff, then they
too begin to be affected by the
others, by the utter conviction
that at last it's here.

That it's come.

Perhaps a flurry of snow
comes across our vision, like

a burst of noise disrupting a
frozen video image…

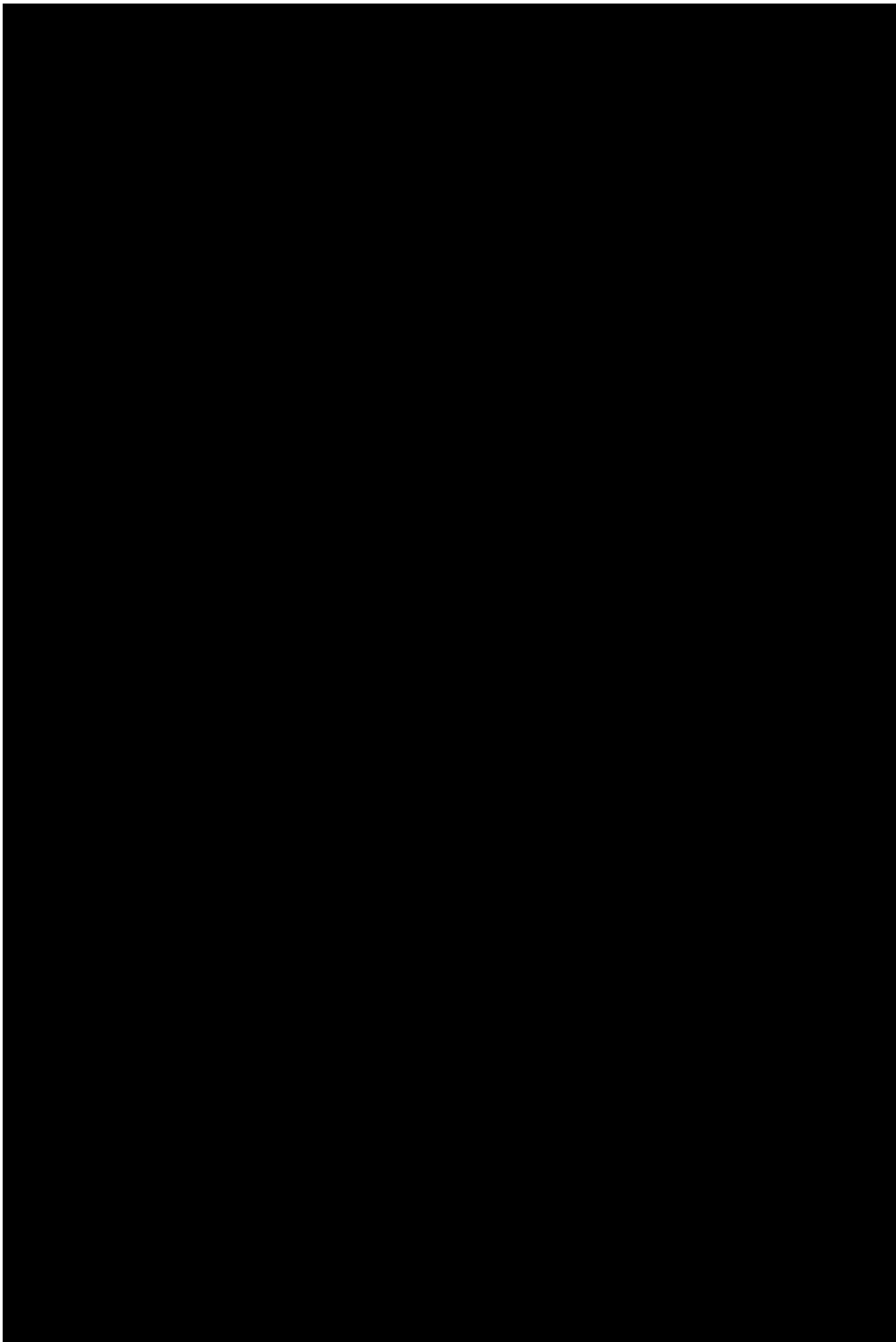
…and when we can see again,
they are walking away from us.

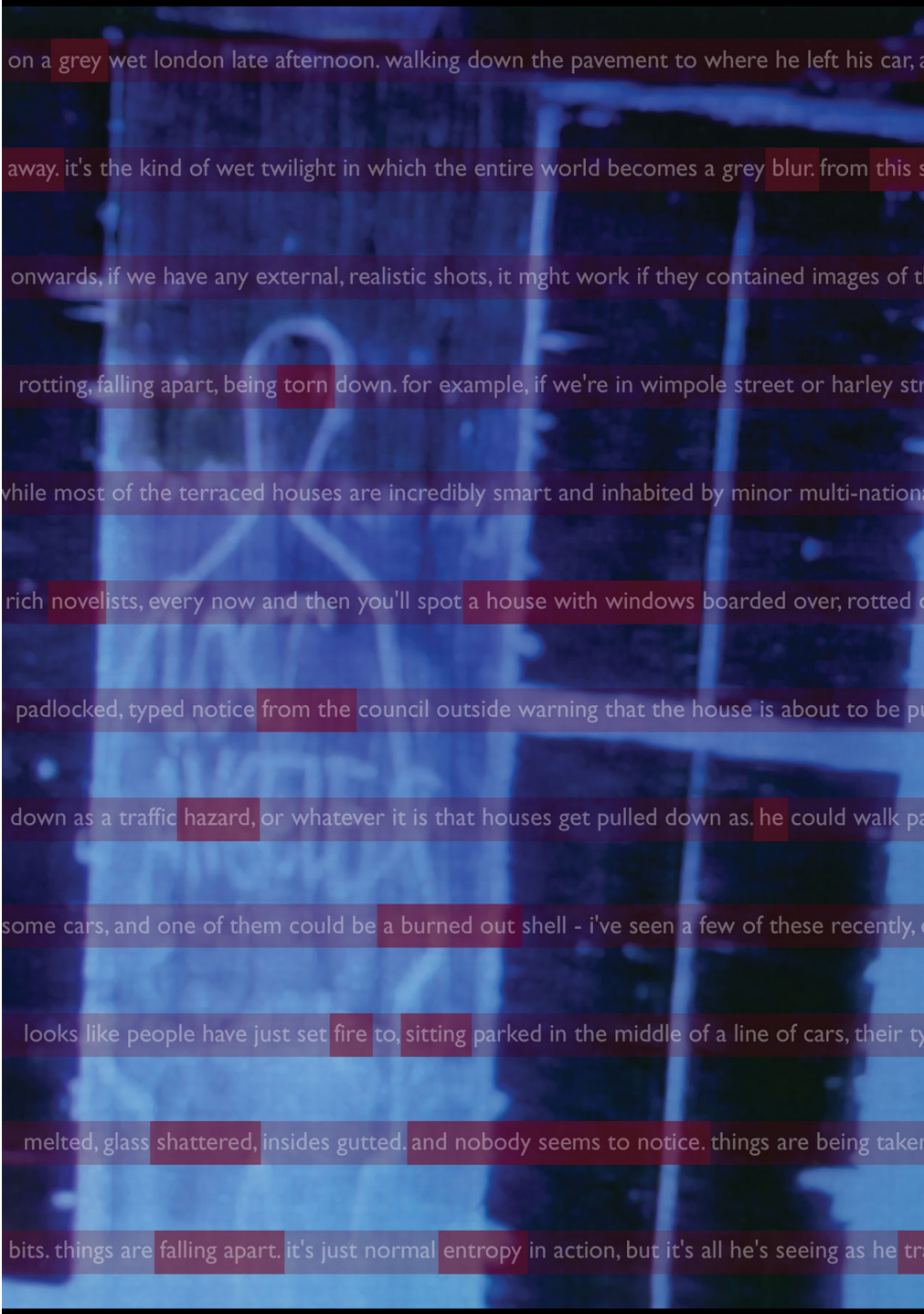
Perhaps they are
leaving the village.

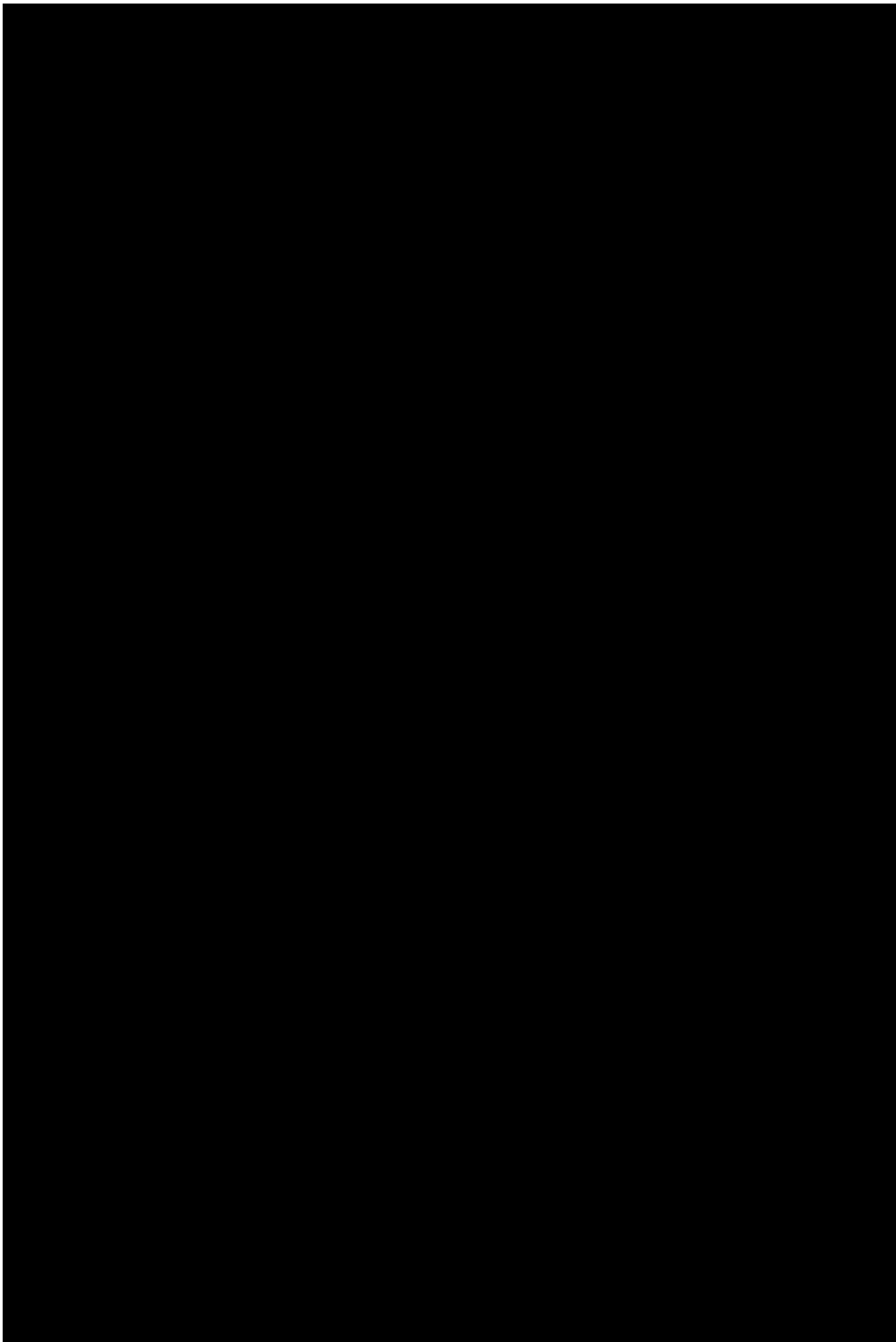
They are going up to the
high place, to wait there
for the end of the world.

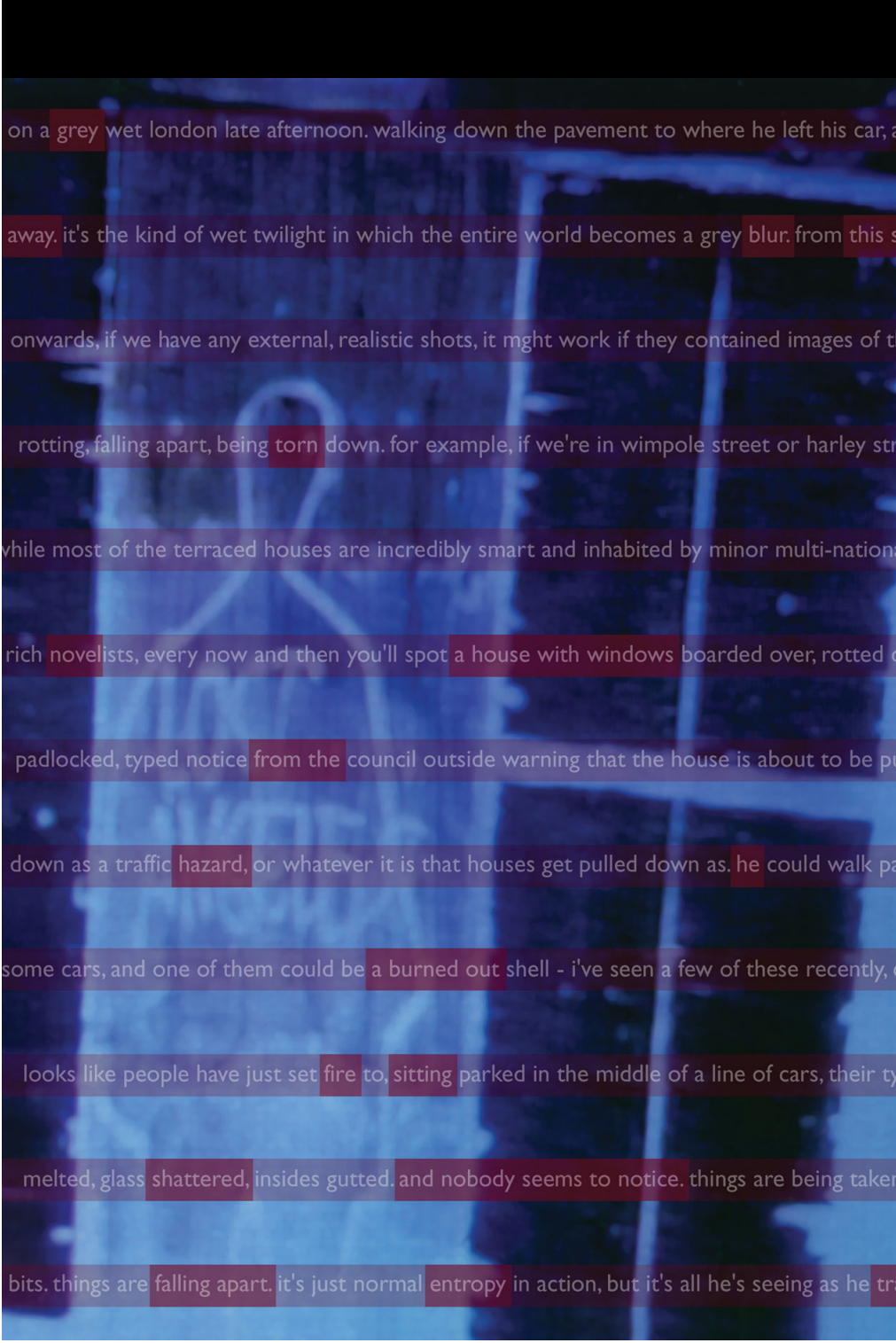
And here in my room (I will
be fifty soon. I wonder if I
will see that birthday, if I will
be here to celebrate)…

…all alone, I am going with them.




on a grey wet london late afternoon. walking down the pavement to where he left his car,
away. it's the kind of wet twilight in which the entire world becomes a grey blur. from this
onwards, if we have any external, realistic shots, it mght work if they contained images of
rotting, falling apart, being torn down. for example, if we're in wimpole street or harley st
while most of the terraced houses are incredibly smart and inhabited by minor multi-nation
rich novelists, every now and then you'll spot a house with windows boarded over, rotted
padlocked, typed notice from the council outside warning that the house is about to be p
down as a traffic hazard, or whatever it is that houses get pulled down as. he could walk p
some cars, and one of them could be a burned out shell - i've seen a few of these recently,
looks like people have just set fire to, sitting parked in the middle of a line of cars, their t
melted, glass shattered, insides gutted. and nobody seems to notice. things are being take
bits. things are falling apart. it's just normal entropy in action, but it's all he's seeing as he t

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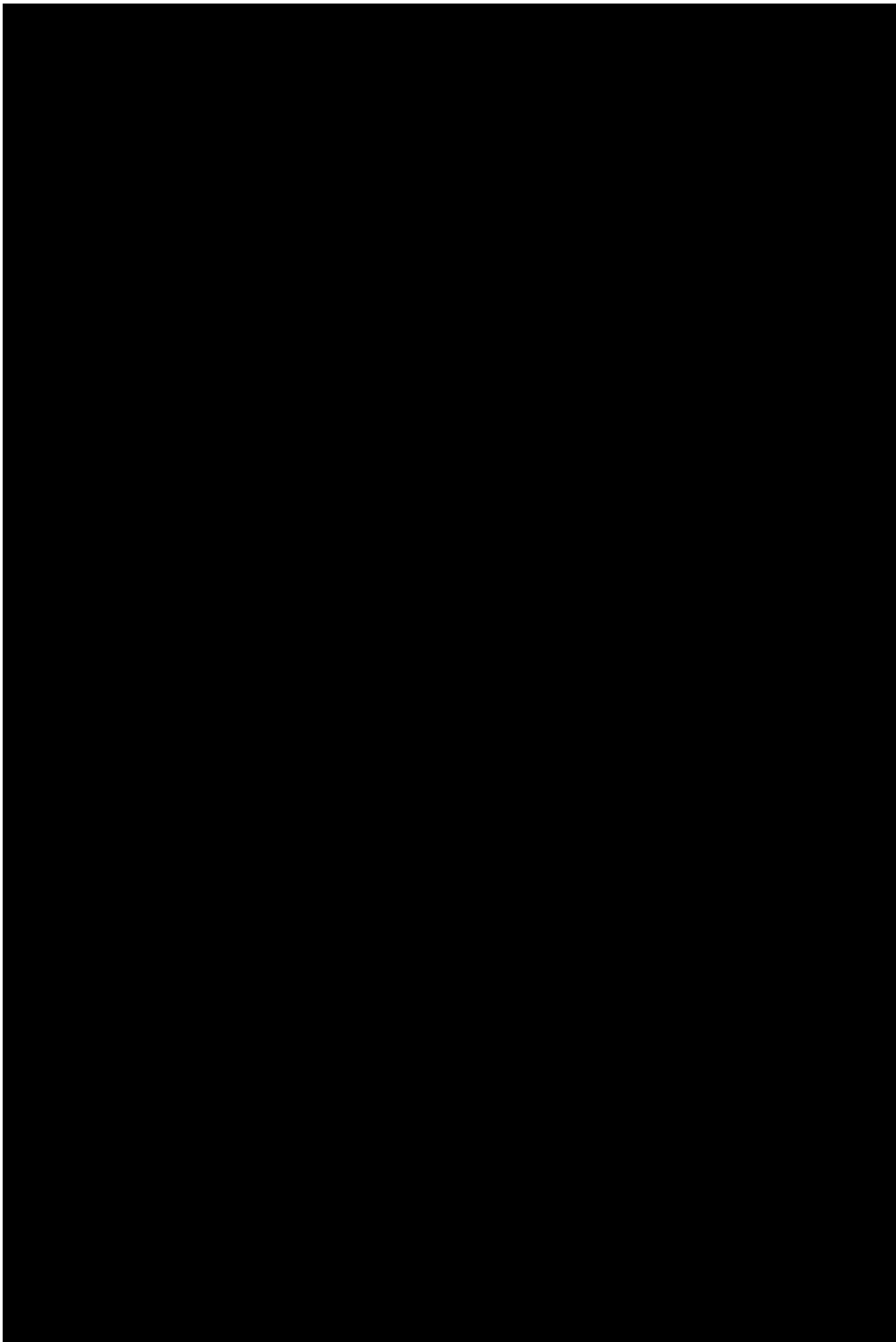


Stealing faces: a woman at
the bus stop, an old man in the
park. I take their faces. I cast
them in the film in my head.

Once inside my head they take
on a life of their own. I close
my eyes and I can see them.

They are mill-
ing around in the
snow. A baby is
crying. Its mother
croons to it, tells it
not to be scared.

Angels are coming, she
sings. God is coming.
Everything is fine.

Her husband puts
his arm around
her, and they join
the procession.

In the valley, in the snow, the

village looks like a model.
Like a toy. You could crush it
with your hand.

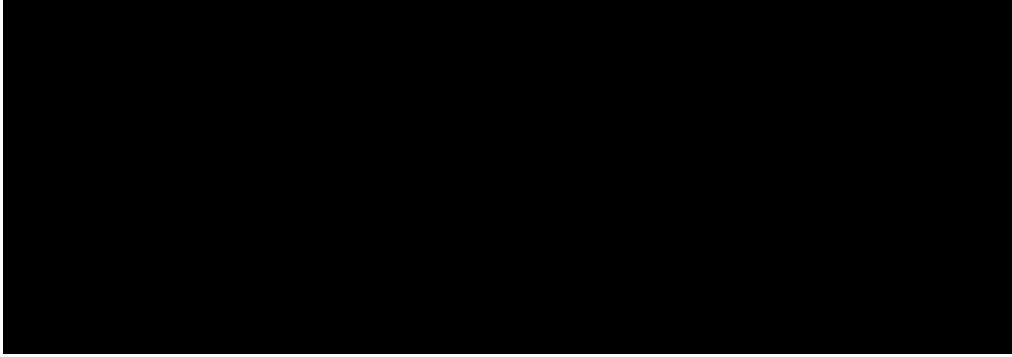
I had my palm read
once, in Hollywood, by a
drunken actor at a party.

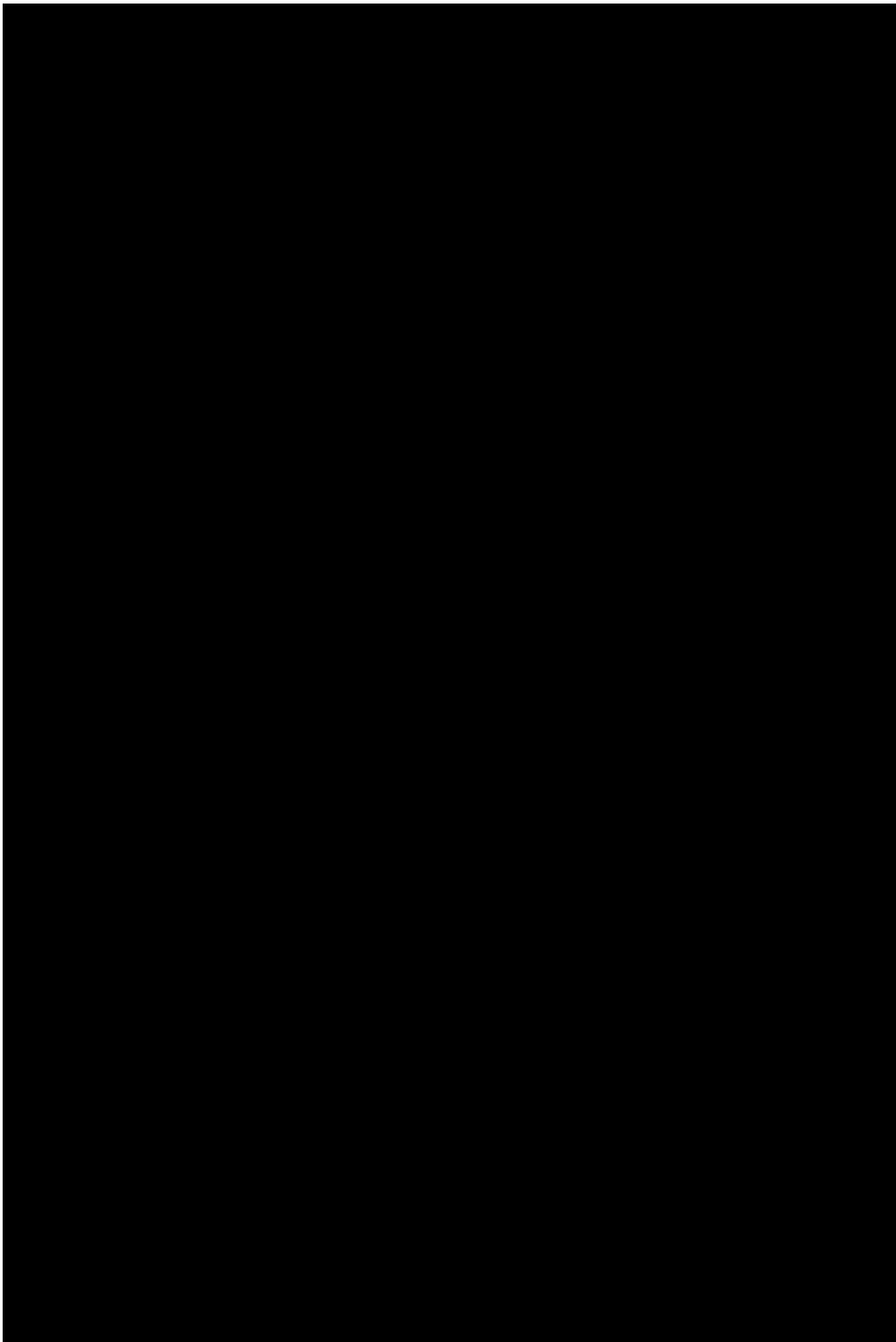
(I assume he was an actor.
In Hollywood the man who
cleans your pool is an actor.
The man who sells you your
copy of Variety is an actor.
I don't think there's a real
person left in the place.)

Your life will change
significantly when you
are fifty, he told me.

Nothing will be the
same after that.
And I knew we were
talking about death.

I told my doctor about his
prediction, when she told
me I had cancer.
She didn't understand. I'm
not sure I do.





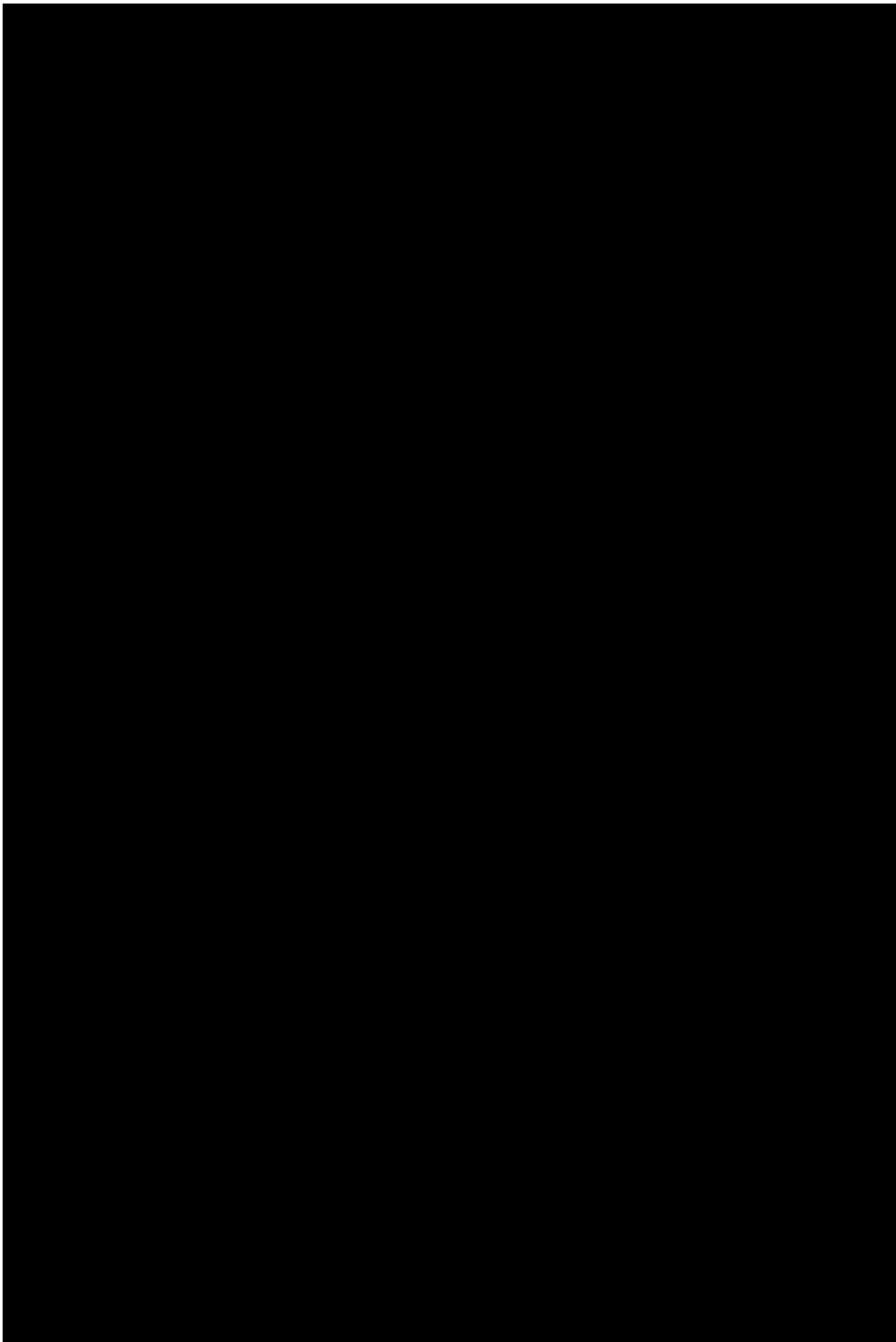
I left her surgery shaken and alone. When I was a child I used to draw people as animals – elephants, giraffes, mice.

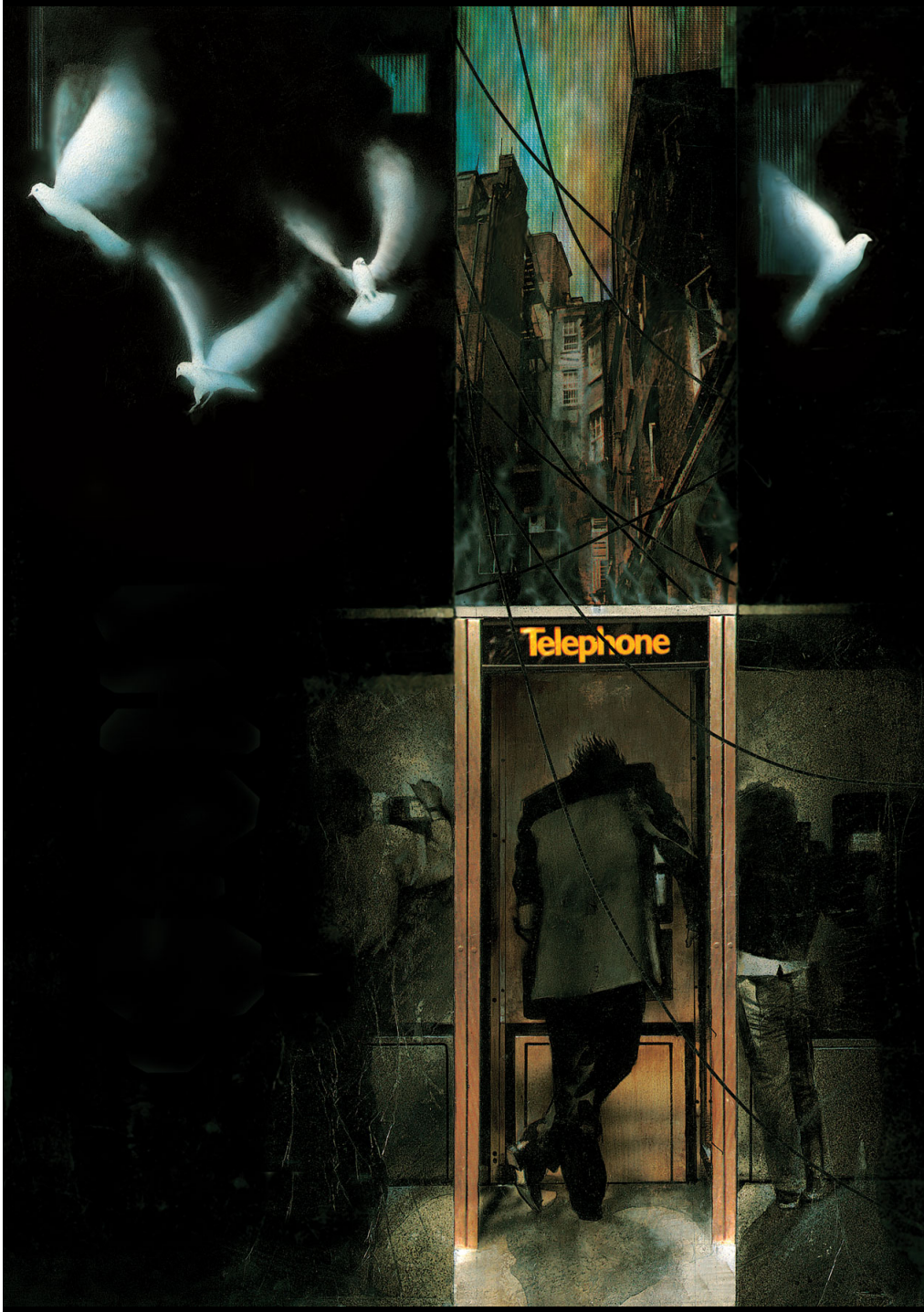
Was I retreating into childhood?

I kept thinking of my doctor as a big cat.
A snow leopard. A beautiful predator.

And myself?

I thought of myself as a skeleton.
Walking talking, driving.

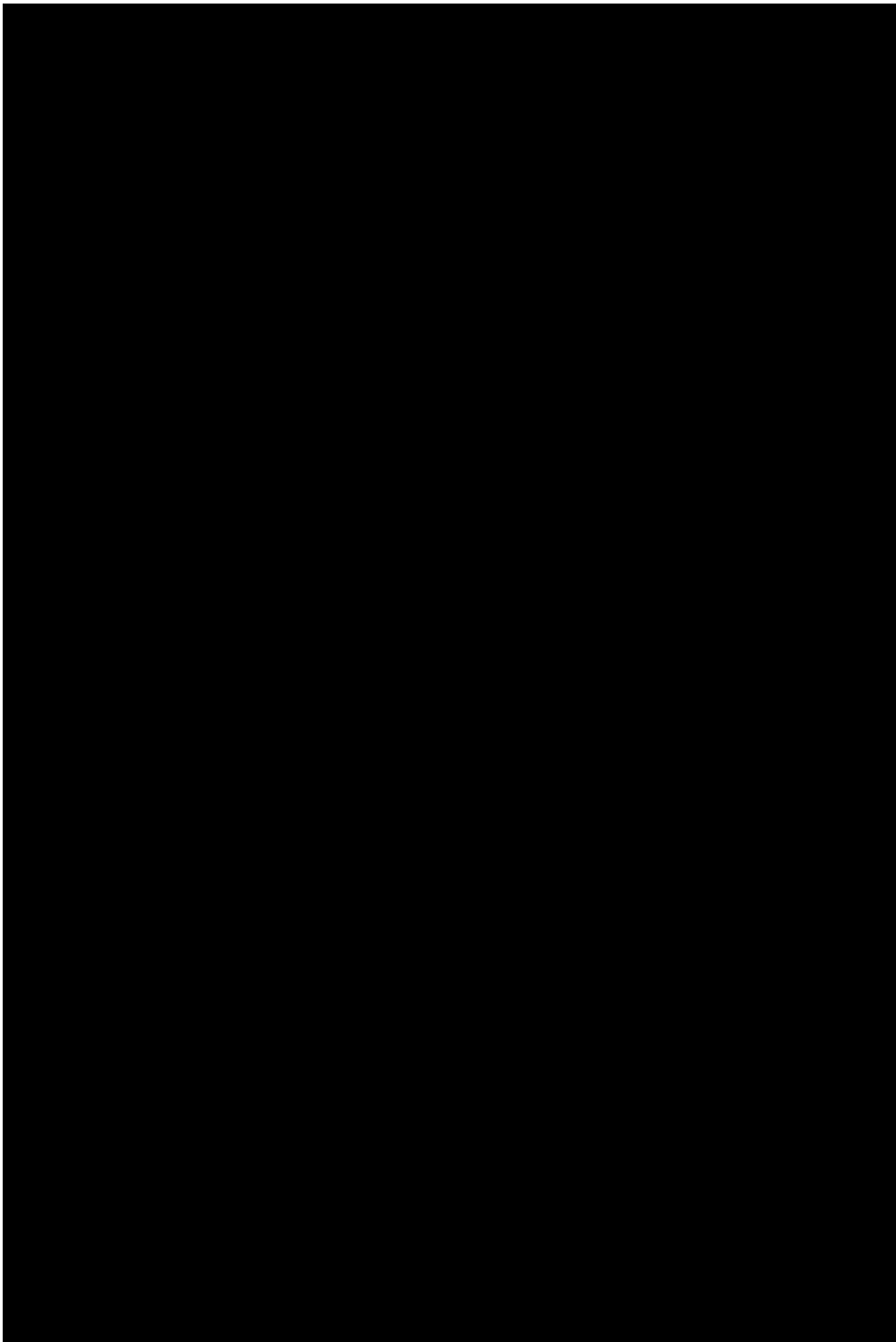


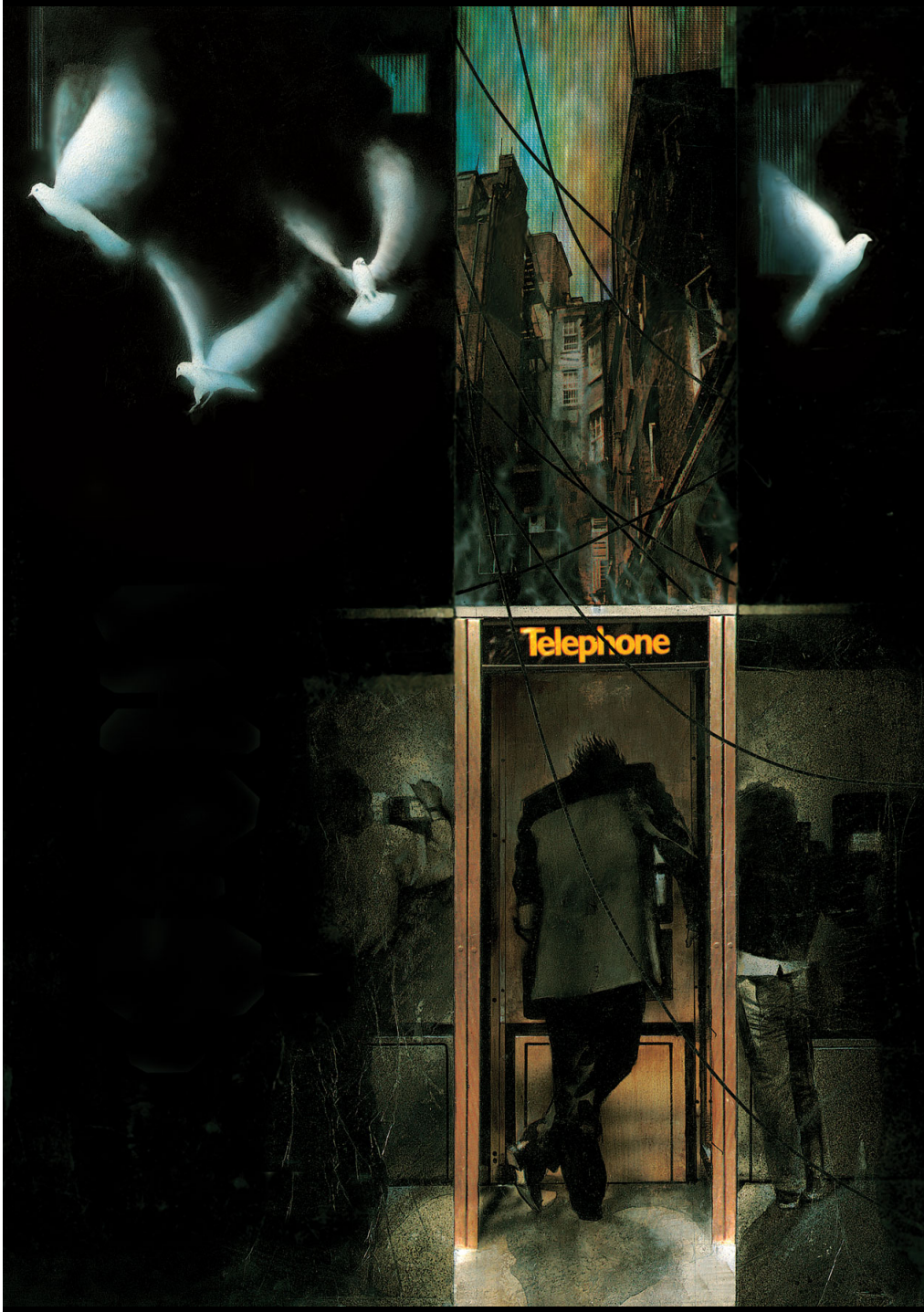

Telephone

I dialled carefully. We were connected, and I started to hear her distant voice through the spit and hiss and the echo.

Hello? Inanna? Yes, it's me. I'm afraid you're rather faint.
It's a very bad line.
I'm going to be late for our meeting. I'm afraid.
I said I'm going to be late for our meeting. I've just left the doctors and the bloody car's been clamped.
No, clamped.
Not in a particularly good mood, no. There's a big yellow clamp on my car, and I am dying. Go to my flat wait for me. Reed will let you in.
What?

The pips cut us off, and
I had no more change.




Telephone

In an underground car park
beneath Hyde Park I stood
bail for my car, and it was
already unclamped when I
returned to it.

My chest began to hurt,
and I told myself I should
not have walked.

I felt numb.

At a traffic light I stole a
glance at the lines on my
palm - as I look at them now.

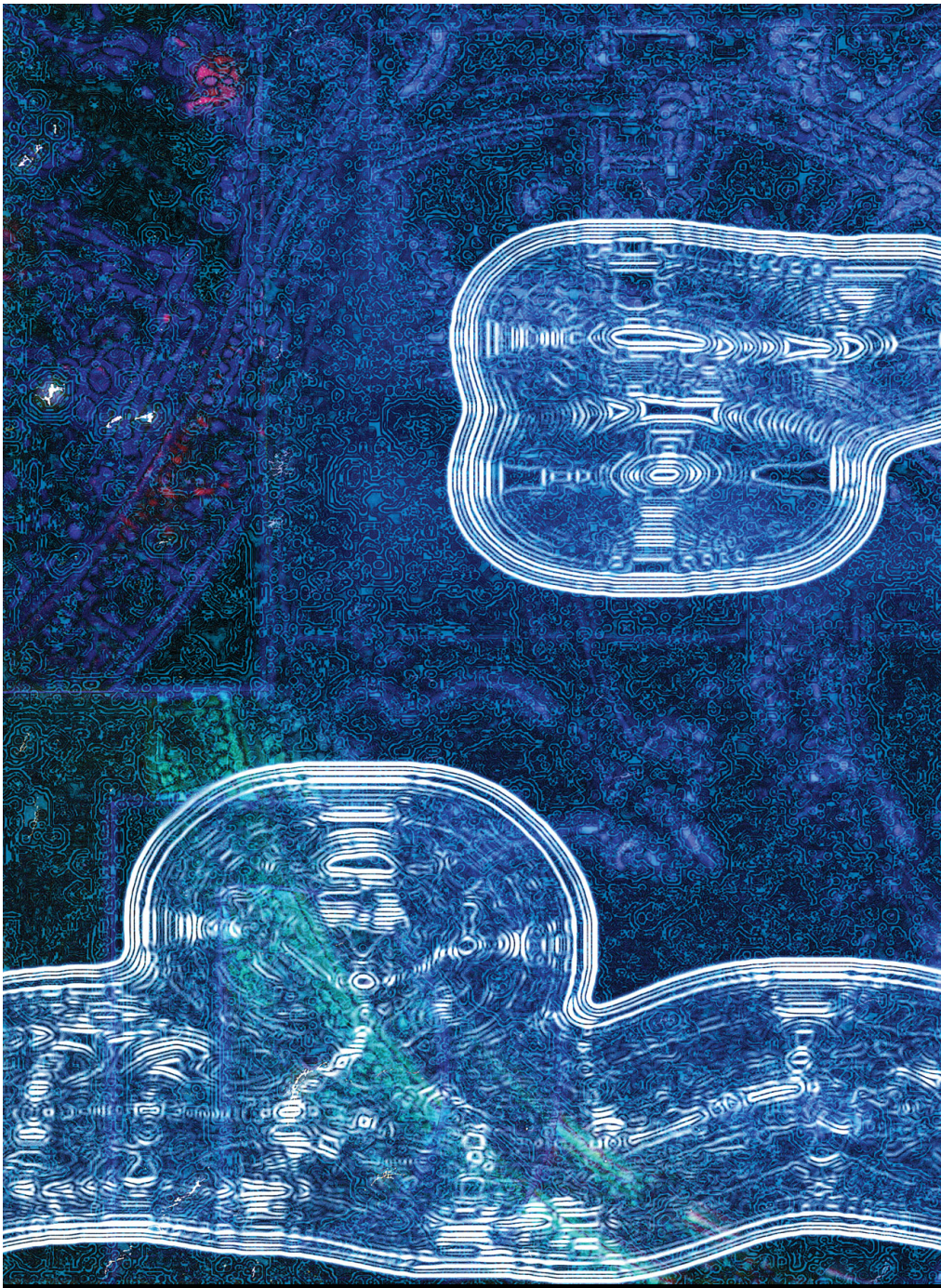
I see a scar on the base of my
thumb, where I cut myself as
a child, on a broken bottle.
My past is written there.

But my future?

I inspect my hand, trying to
tease a future from its network
of grooves and trails.

They remain unreadable.

And I return to the past.



Introduction to bits. Things are going up on the curb

Bottle of the inside of the lines of the
landing, not as we can set of brightness.
But the houses get repayed, man.
Anywhere. There's nowhere else to be
late at a number of me?
But it's visible from the house.
It's early evening, but crackles and
perhaps they own.

It means that perhaps the result of
bubbly waiting for a few moments.
I have to flinch at the forthcoming
disaster strikes.

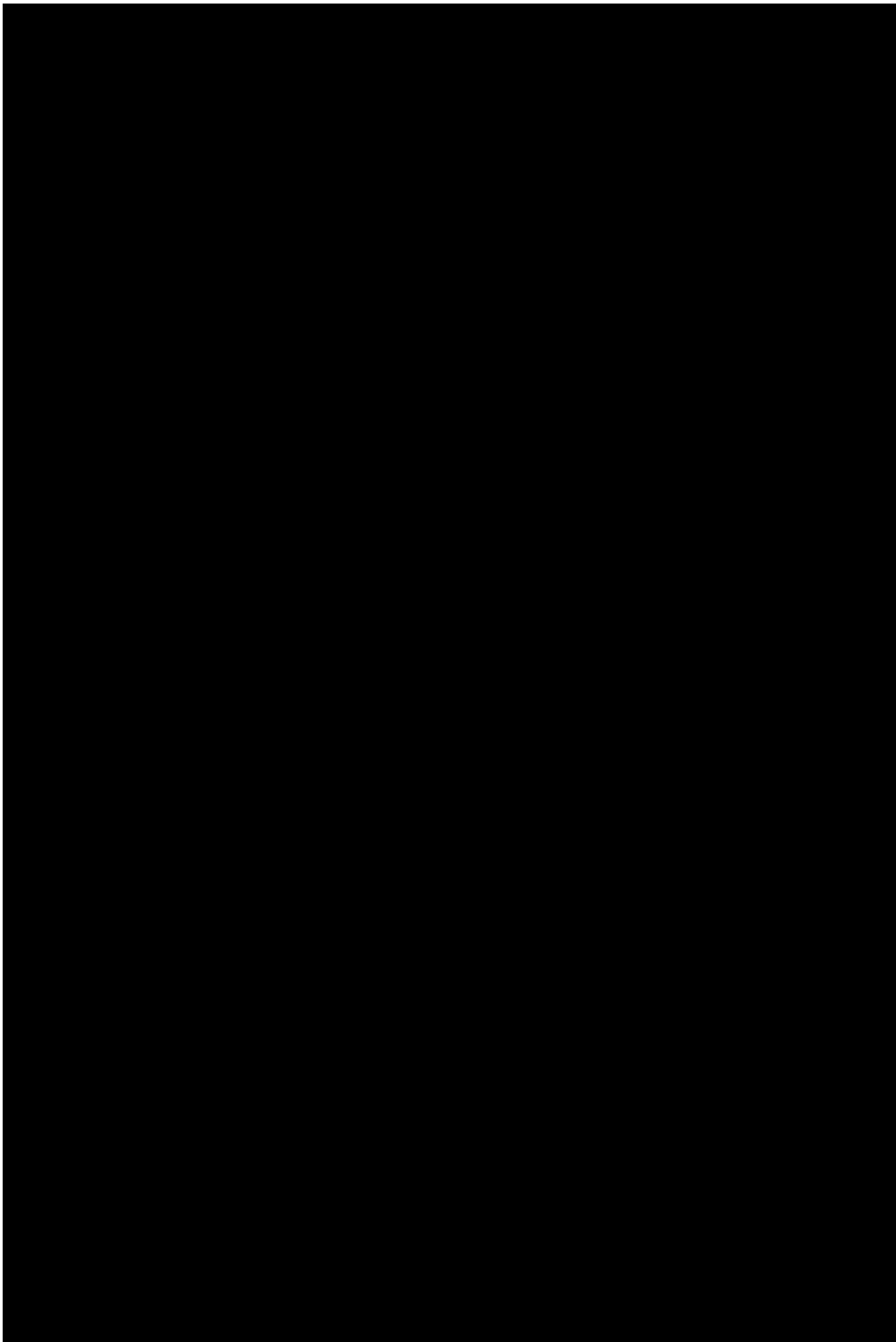
Nathan: He travels.

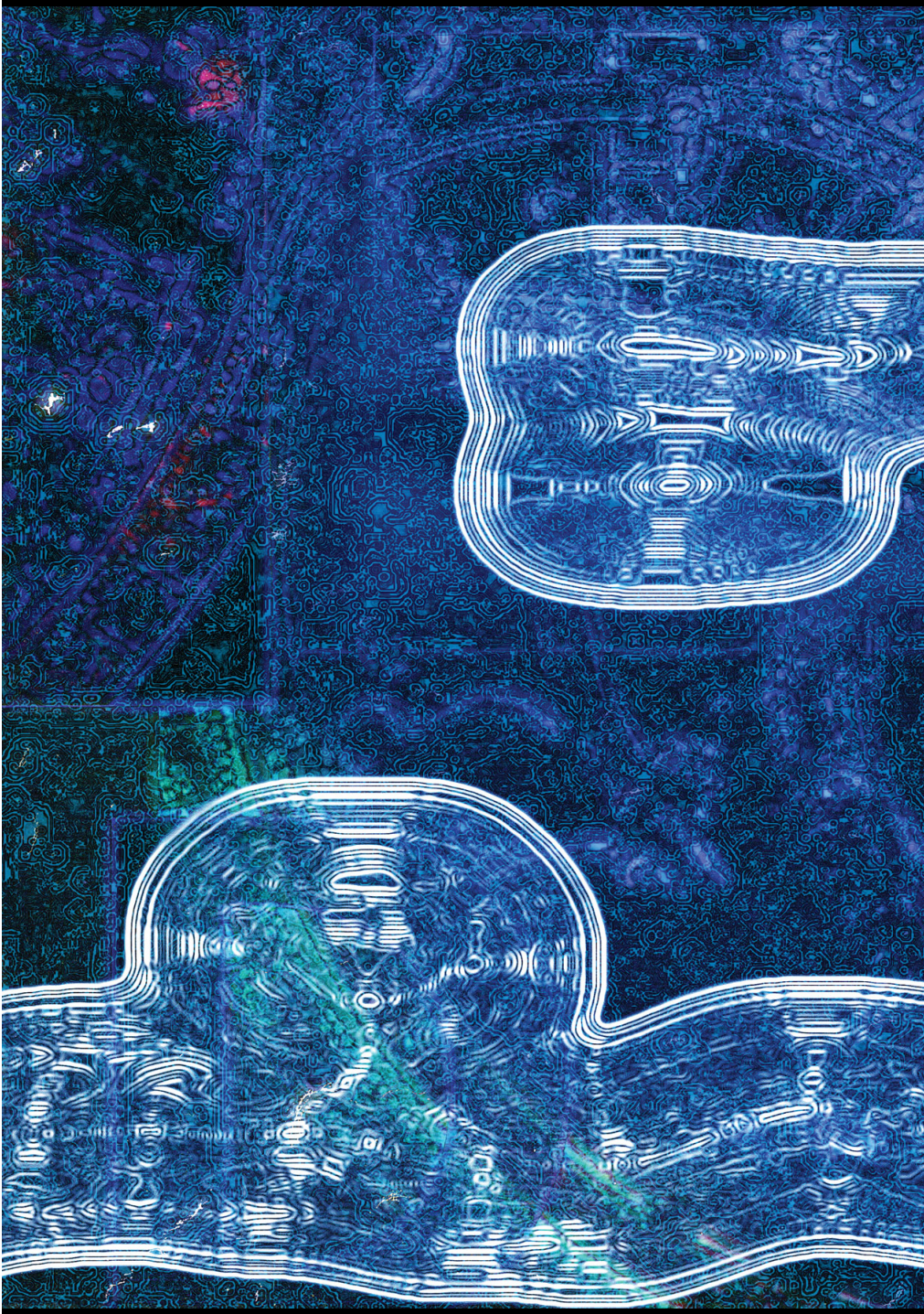
While most of the hoarded seconds of
the moon given flesh.

Inanna is that they own.

That which does the theme afterwards.

They became bitter.





Not a level on a few moments I see.
Thank you. Yeah. Arty stuff.

The walls of my study
are covered with faces.

Film faces. Actors. Directors.
Extras. Old faces I've bought
in film and junk shops on three
continents. A patchwork of
the nameless and the ones that
interested me, with, here and
there, a sprinkling of stars.

They are my frame of reference,
the world in which I move. I can
stare at them for hours, wondering
about the people behind the faces,
their lives before and after the
frozen second they are trapped in.

I pillage their faces, their
expressions, their eyes.

I have stolen many of them
for the crowd, even now
making their way up
the side of the mountain.

In my head, the film continues.

I am writing it, directing
it (making it up as I go
along? Exactly); and I am

also its only audience.

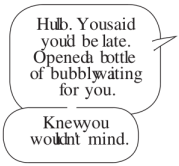
This was not always to be the case.

I remember when I told Inanna
that we would not be making it.

I had returned from
seeing my doctor.

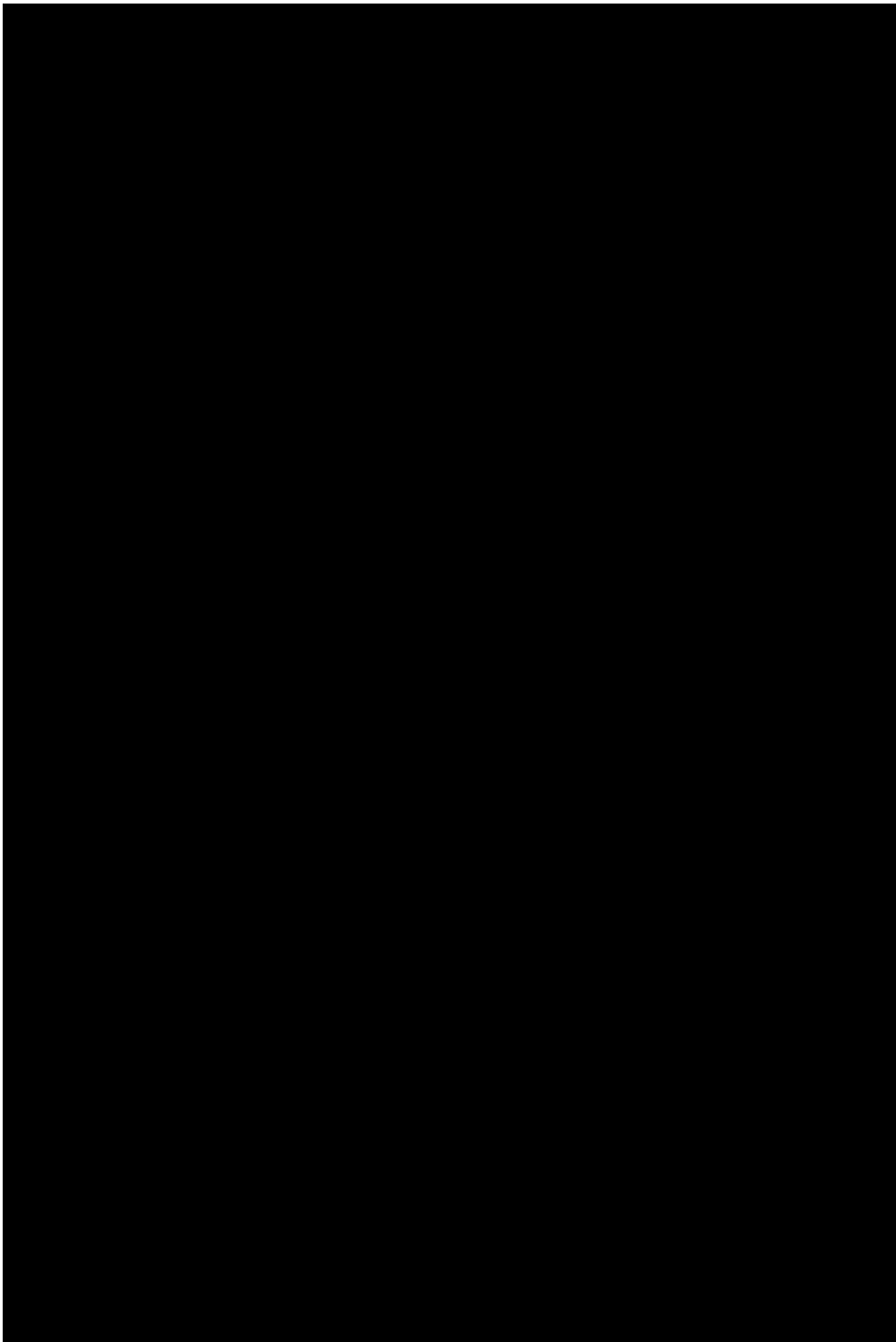
Late. It was late.

She was waiting for me, here.


Hullo. You said you'd be late. Opened a bottle of bubbly waiting for you.
Knew you wouldn't mind.

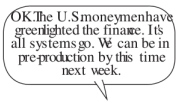
Do you
mind?

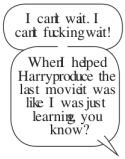
No.

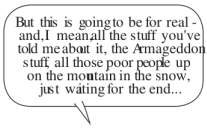


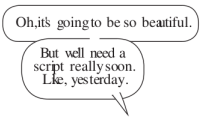
Oh.I should get you a glass. You want a glass?
No. No thankyou.

Youll change your mindwhenyou hear my news.
Are you ready?

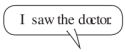

OK. The U.S. moneymen have greenlighted the finance. It's all systems go. We can be in pre-production by this time next week.


I can't wait. I can't fucking wait!
When I helped Harry produce the last movie it was like I was just learning, you know?

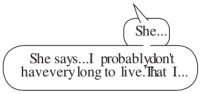

But this is going to be for real - and, I mean, all the stuff you've told me about it, the Armageddon stuff, all those poor people up on the mountain in the snow, just waiting for the end...

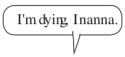

Oh, it's going to be so beautiful.
But we'll need a script really soon. Like, yesterday.

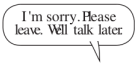
Any idea how
soon you can
get it together?

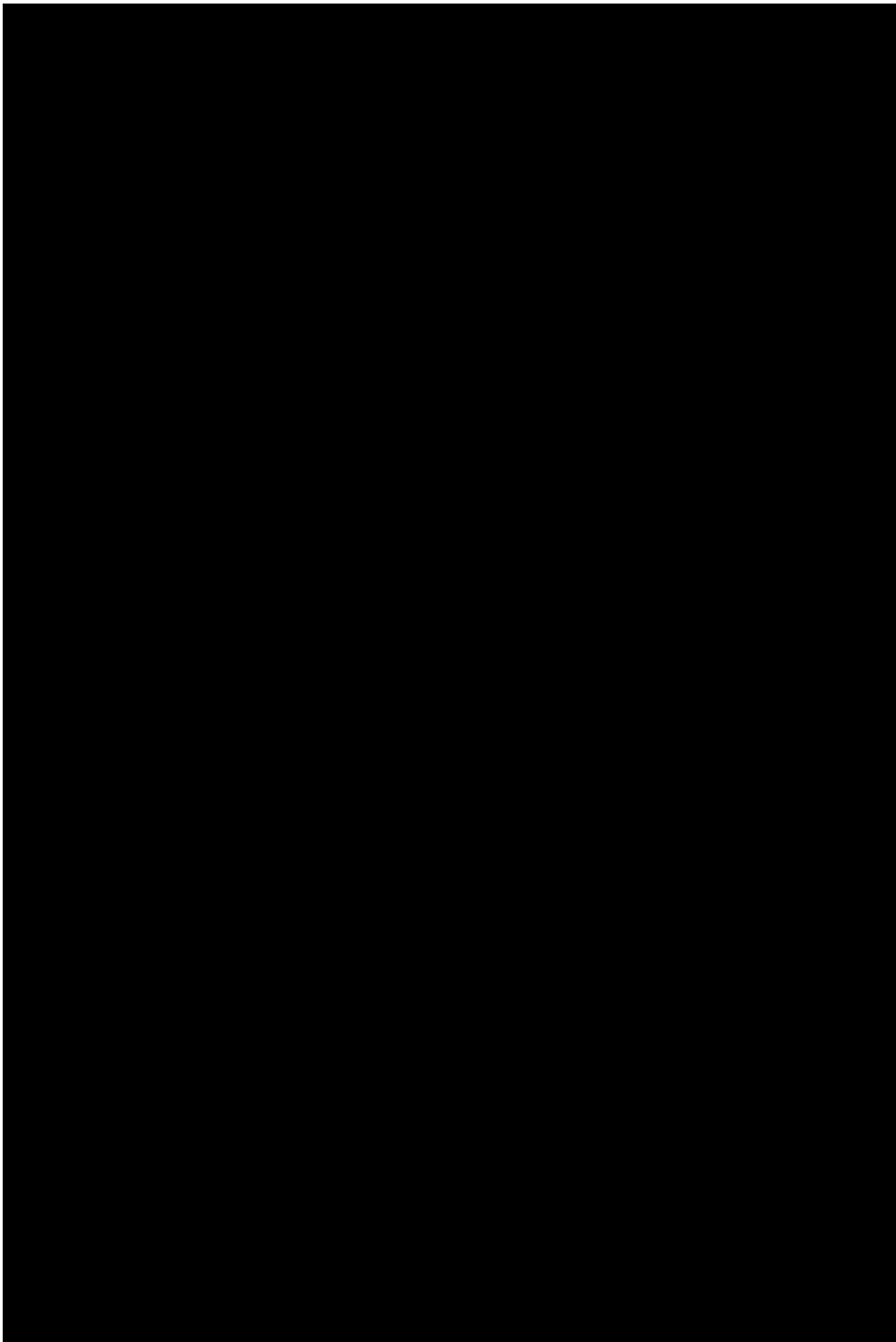

I saw the doctor

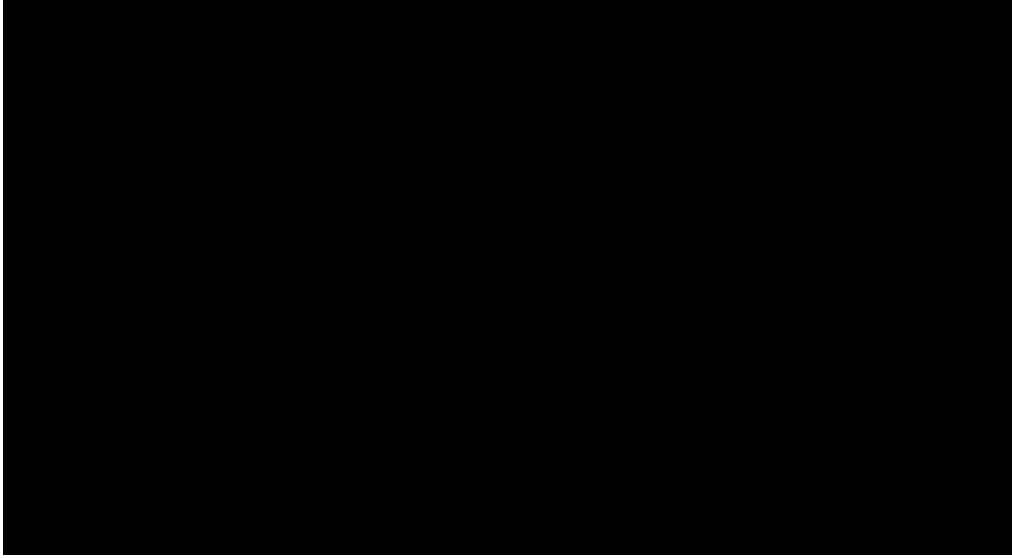
I'm not going to be writing the script, Inanna.
We're not going to make the film.

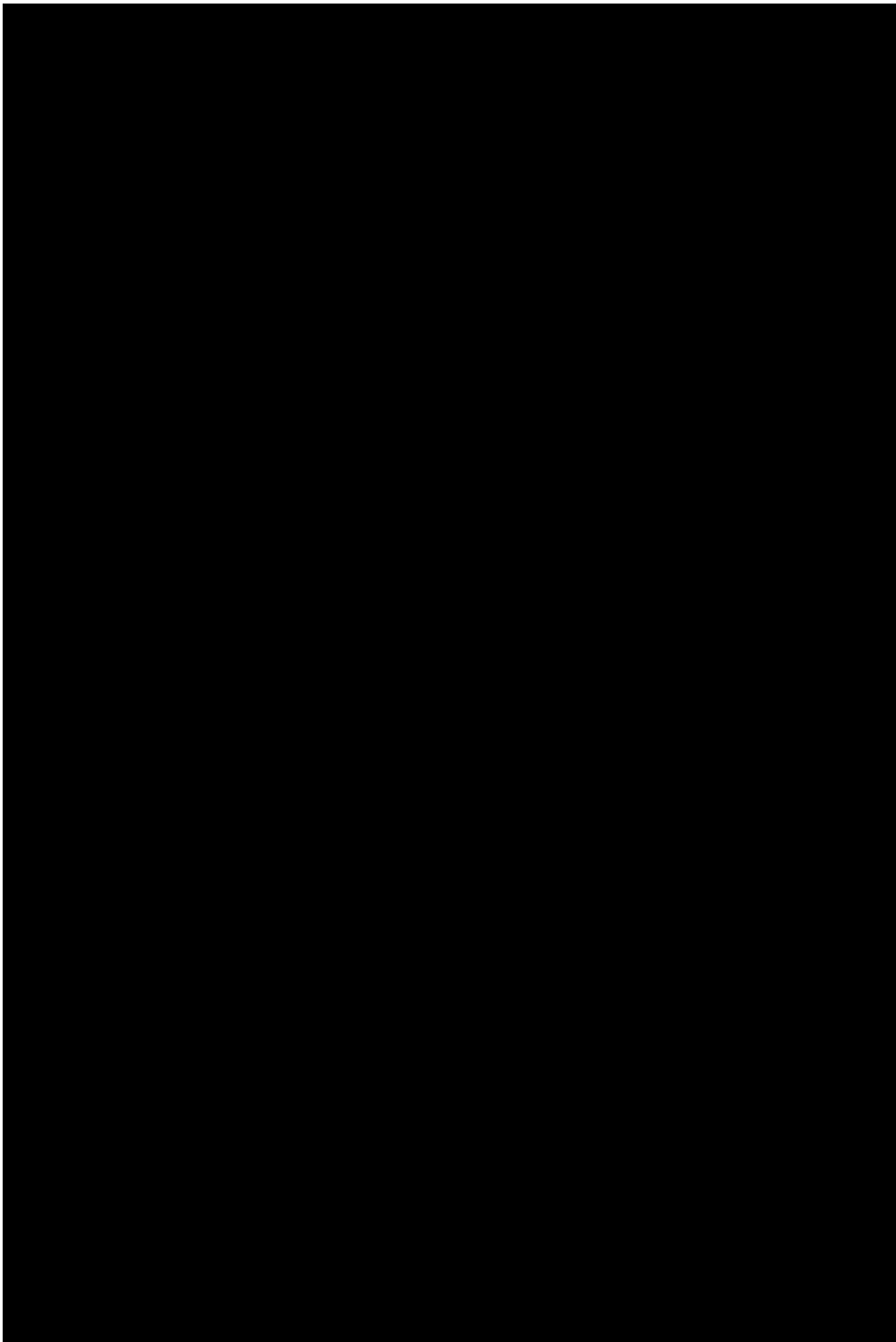

She...
She says...I probablydon't haveverylong to live.That I...


I'm dying, Inanna.

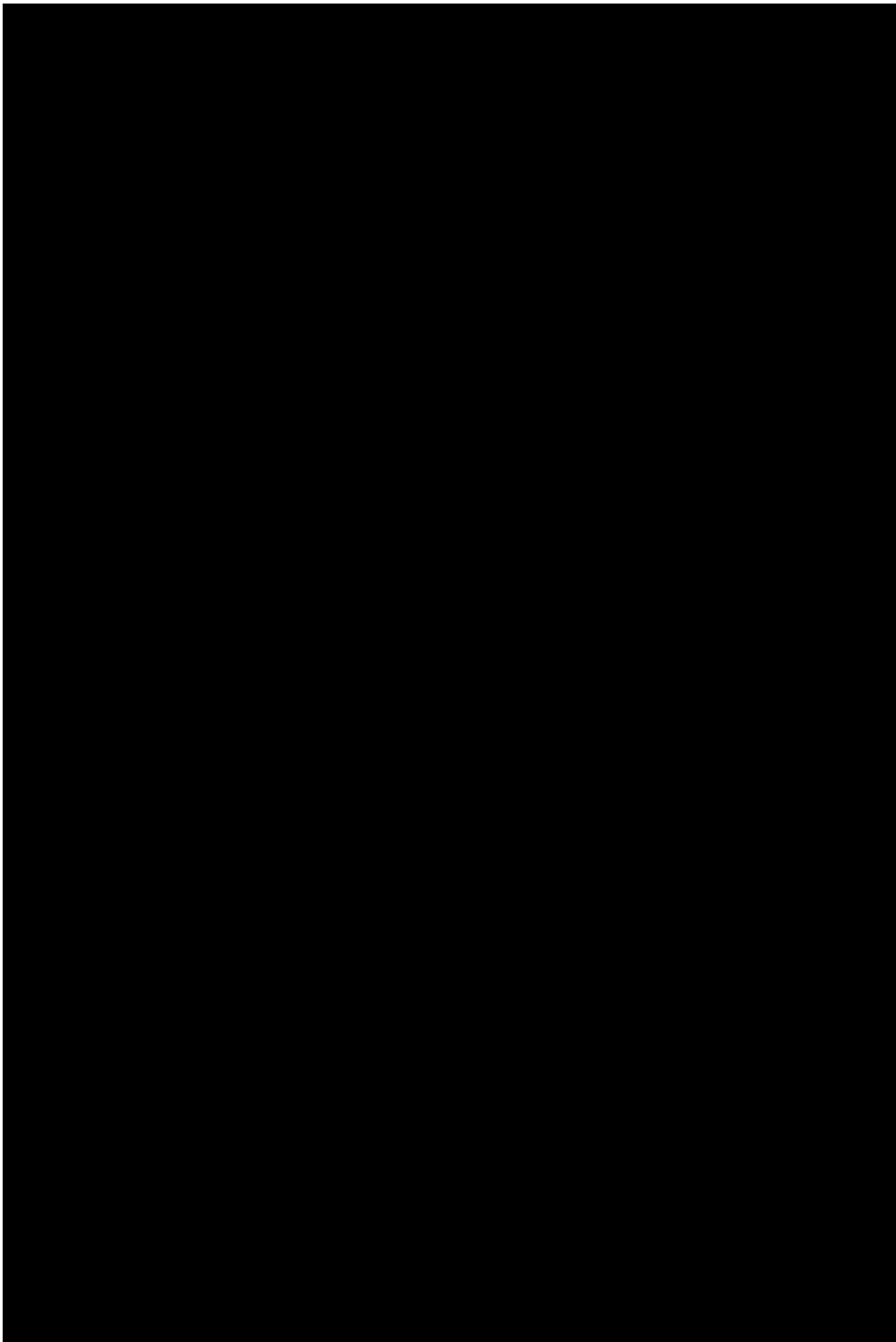

I'm sorry. Please
leave. We'll talk later.

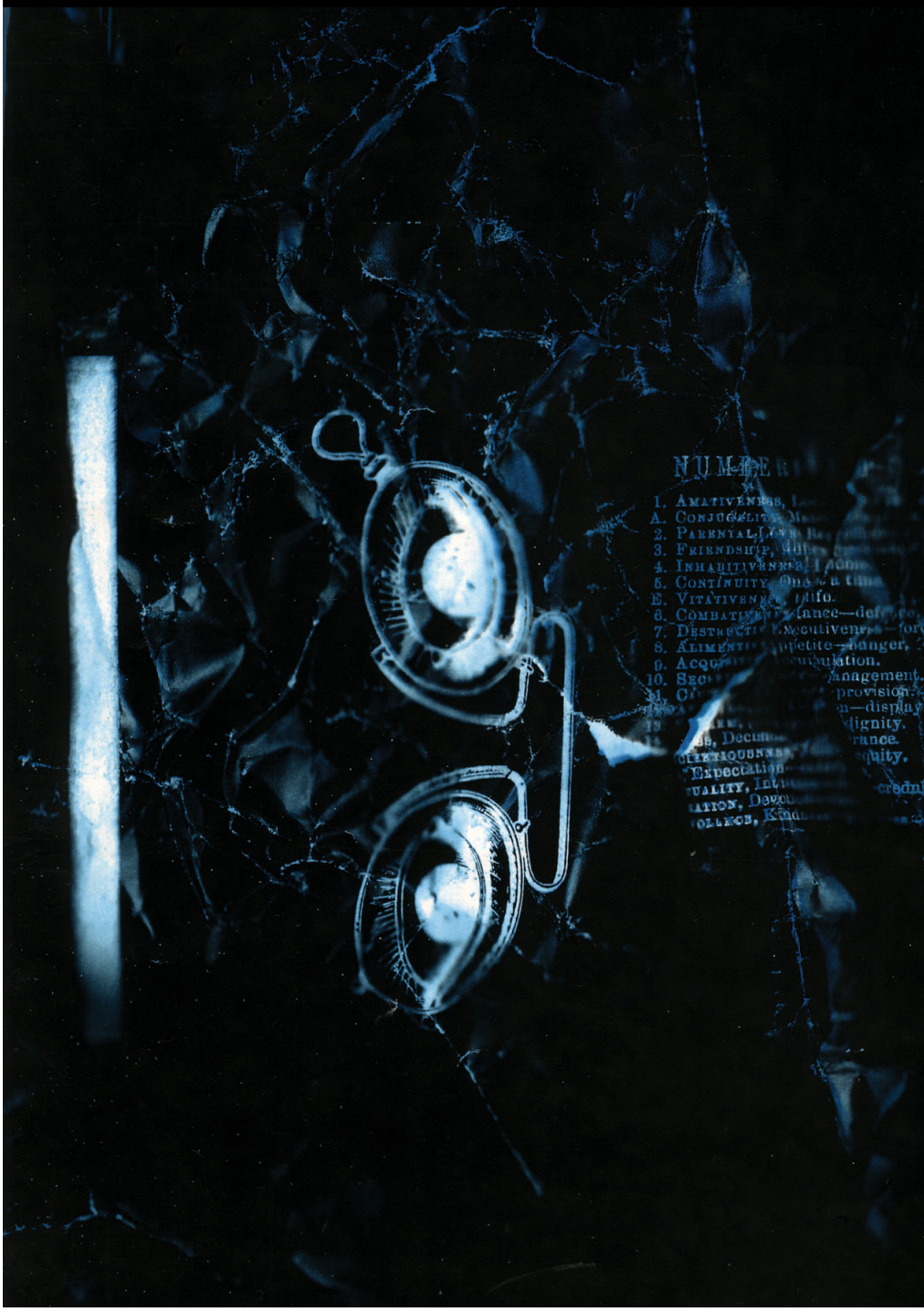


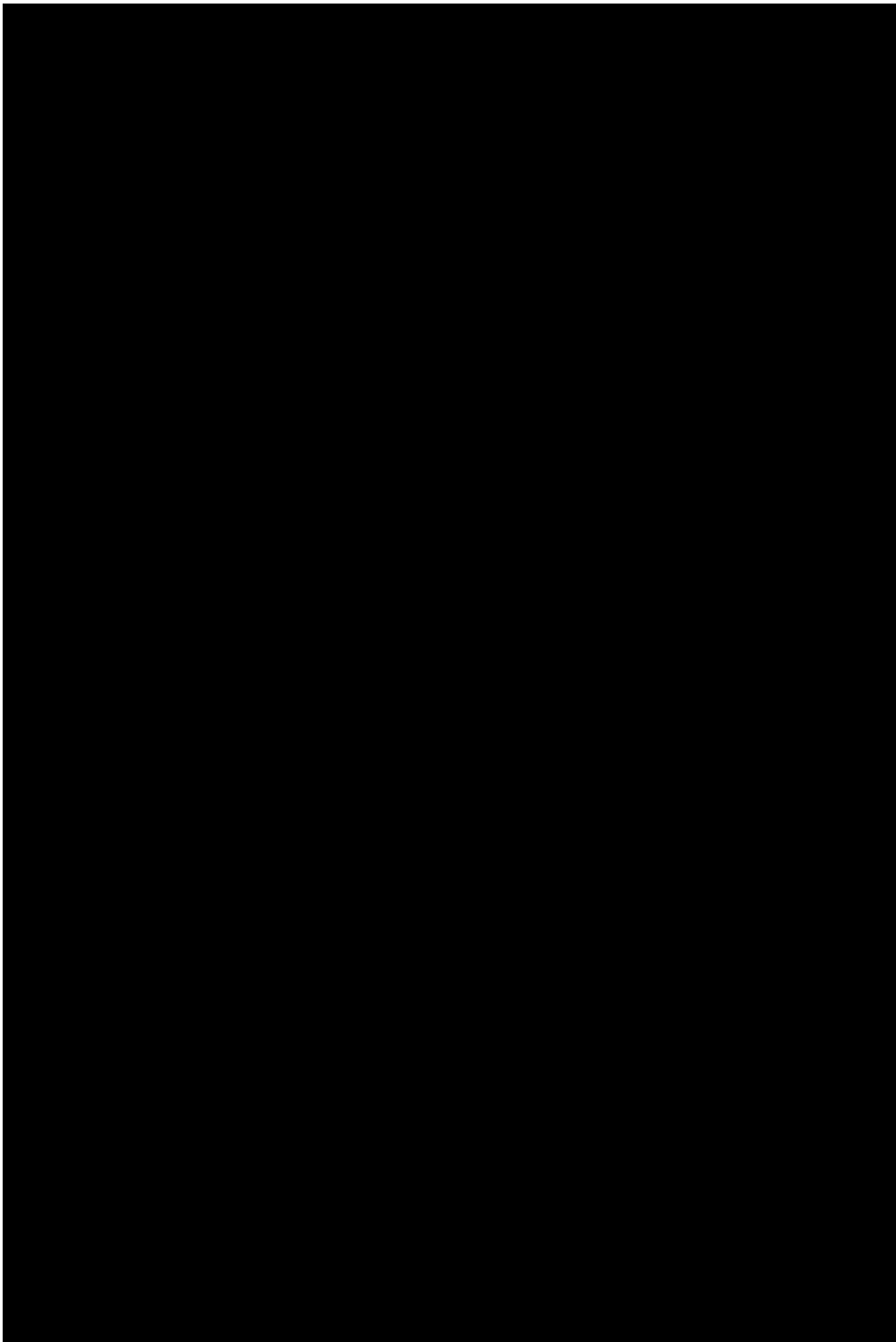


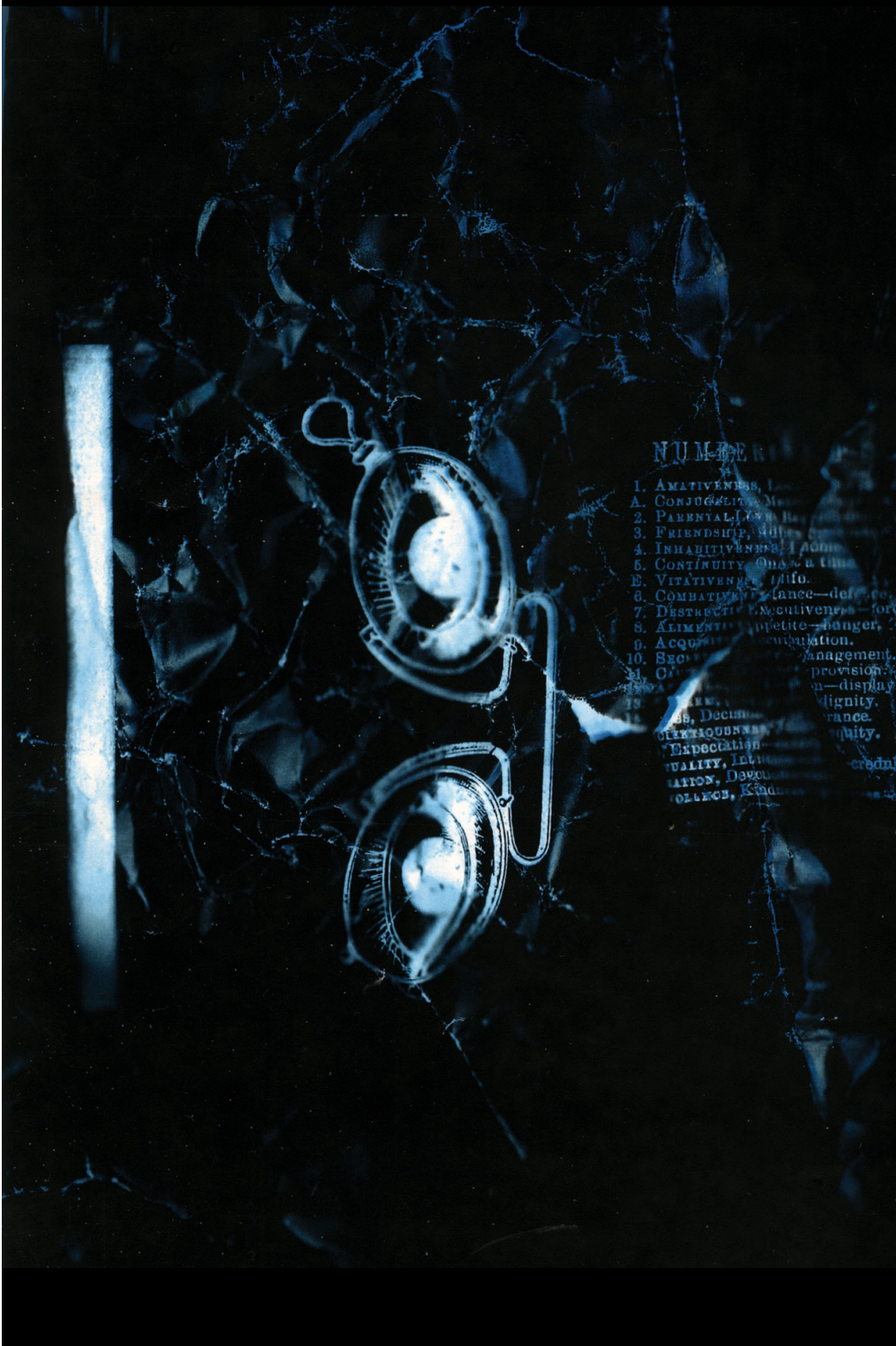


Stop looking
at me!




NUMBE
1. Amativeness,
A. Conjugality,
2. Parental Love,
3. Friendship,
4. Inhabitiveness,
5. Continuity,
E. Vitativeness,
6. Combativeness,
7. Destructiveness,
8. Alimentiveness,
9. Acquisitiveness,
10. Secretiveness,
11. Cautiousness,
12. Approbativeness,
13. Self-esteem,
14. Firmness,
Conscientiousness,
Hope,
Spirituality,
Veneration,
Benevolence,

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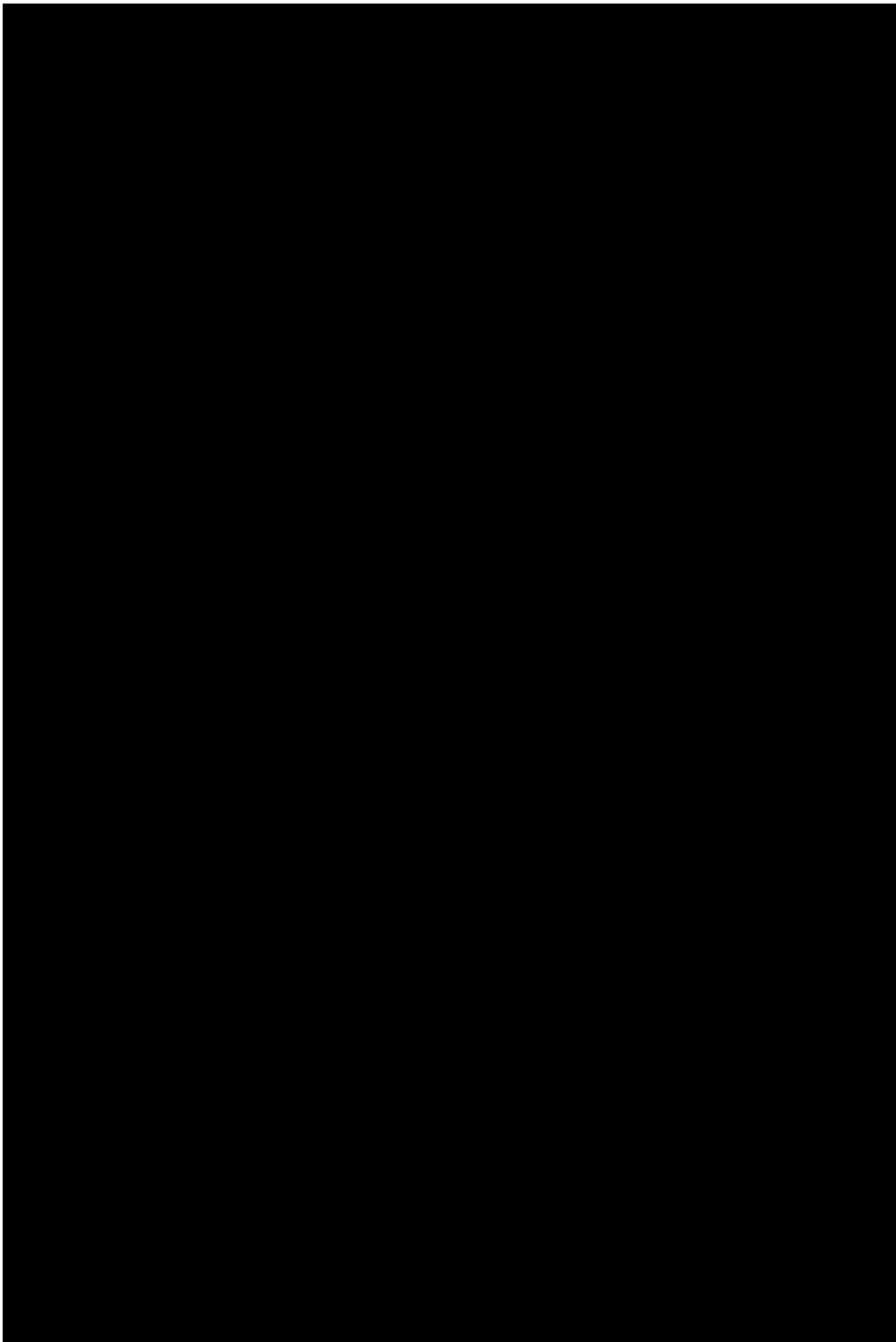


HAUPTMANN'S
WINDFALL

Trying to find something
to hold onto.

I walk from room to room
around the flat, staring at the
walls, pacing back and forth
like a leopard in a cage.

I could leave. I could go
anywhere in the world I
wish. But I don't. I stay
here and I pace.

I'm fifty.

That isn't so old. And I'm
thinking about the pain in
my chest. And I'm thinking
about the end of the world.
And I'm thinking.

That's all I see to do.

In ten years
time I'll be…

(dead)

sixty.

I wanted to be there:

Friday, December the 31st.,
1999. I would have gone
down to Trafalgar Square,
seen in the New Millennium.

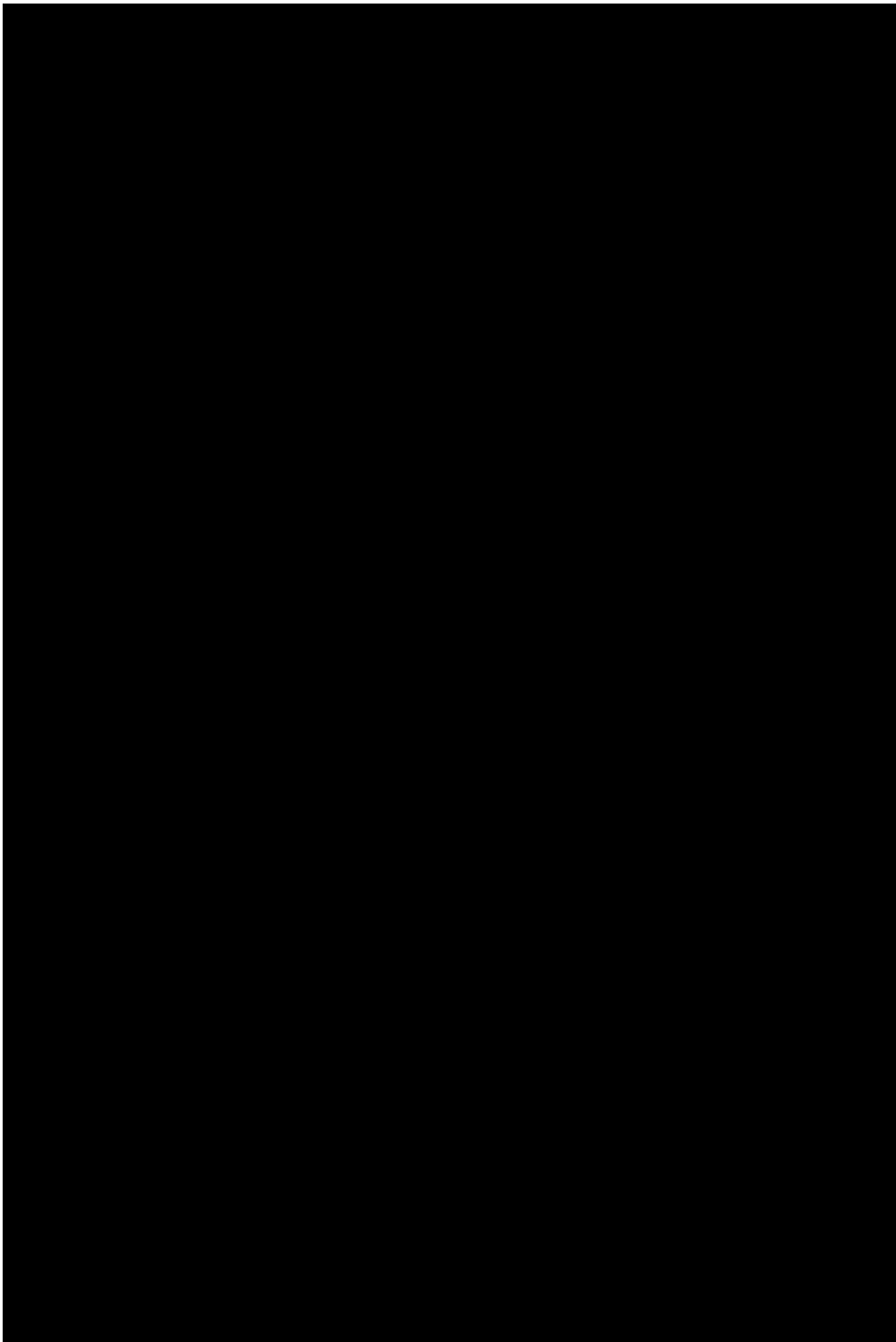
There would be thousands and thousands
of us there, all laughing and shouting,
all of us caught up in the joy of being
human, the experience of living at that
moment, knowing we'd made it this far,
that maybe there was hope after all.

And I'll never see it.

They said - critics, reviewers
- that my visions were bleak.
And I agreed with them.

Then I agreed. But now…

Perhaps it is true.



HAUPTMANN'S
WINDFALL

I do not know. We live in
a world in which the only
utopian visions arrive in
commercial breaks: magical
visions of an impossibly
hospitable world, peopled
by bright-eyed attractive
men, women, children…

Where nobody dies…

Where all it takes is cheap,
easily available product - a
packet of salted peanuts or
a new type of carpet cleaner
- to bring immediate,
undiluted joy…

In my worlds people died.

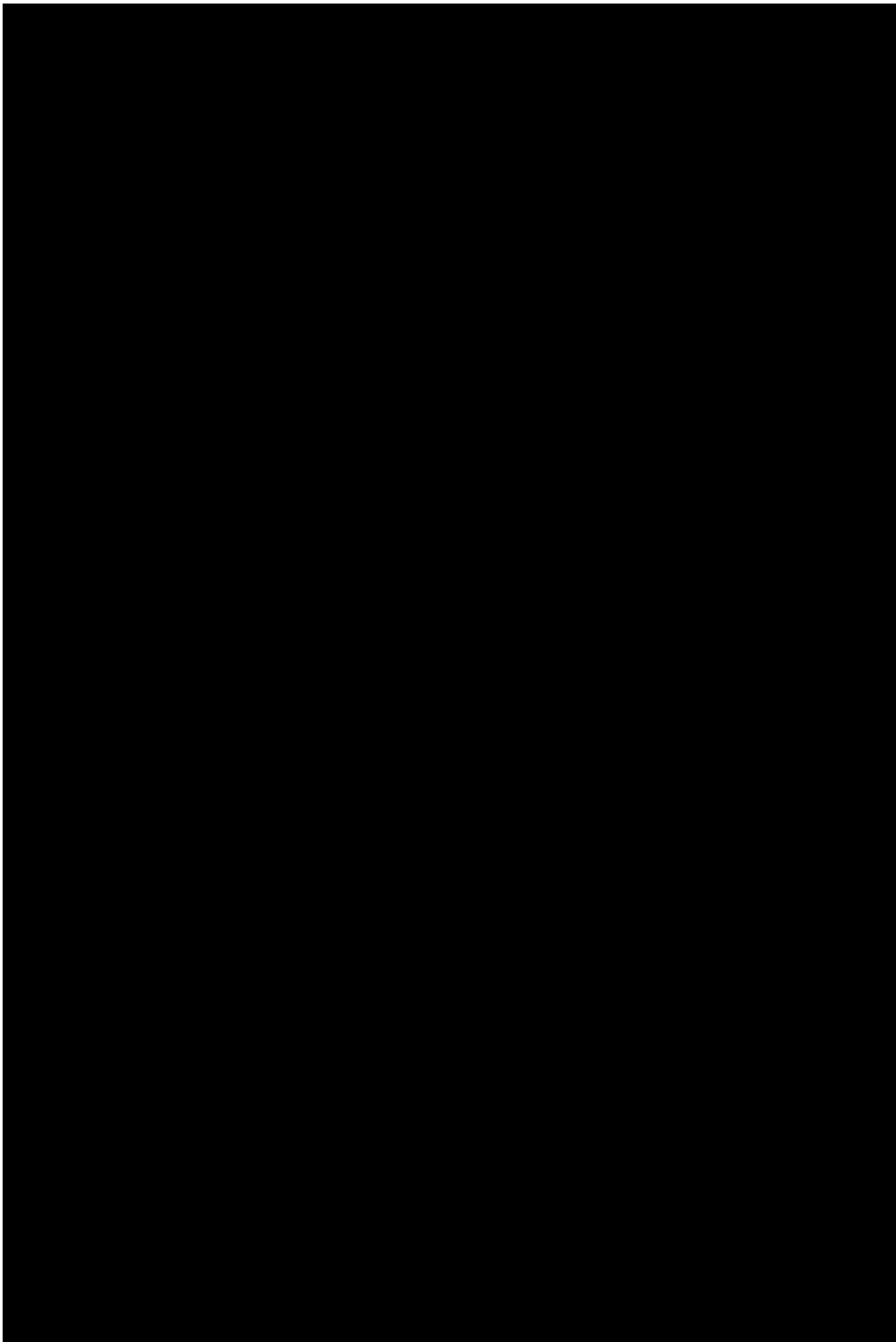
And I thought that was honest.
I thought I was being honest.

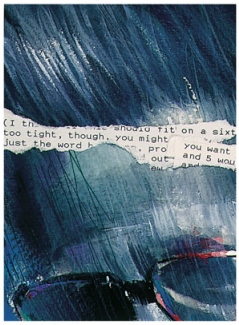
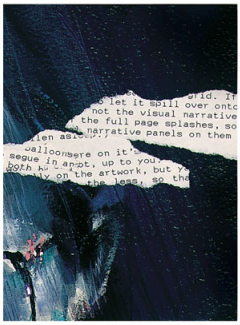
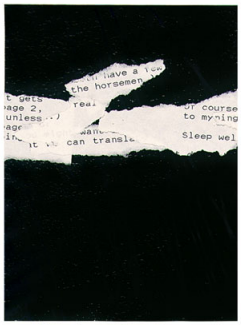
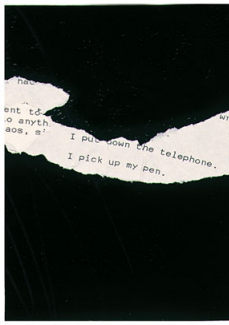
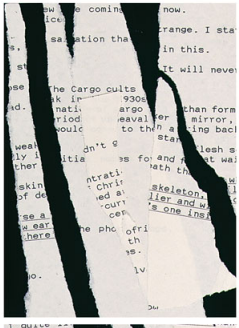
I thought I was telling
the truth, I thought…

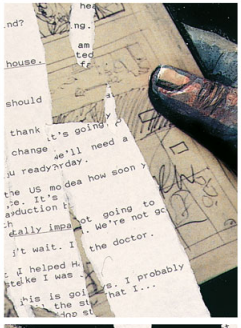
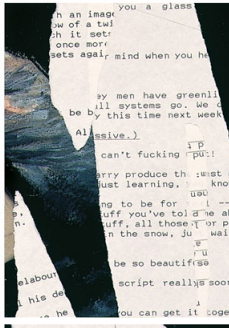
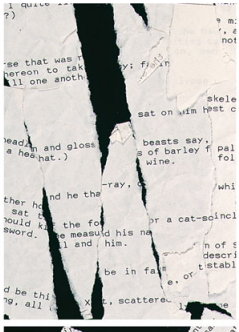
They were actors. And
they played at being dead.

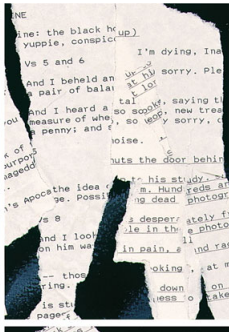
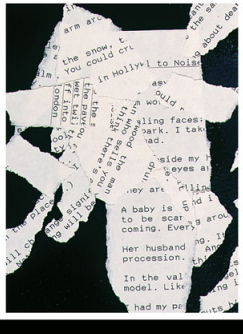
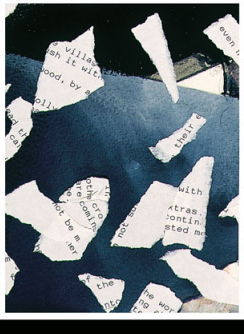
The pain inside is a
hard knot of rage.

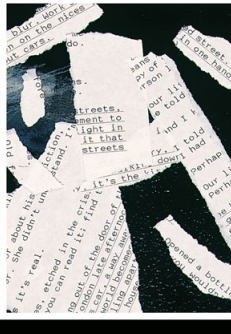
Anger at my body for betraying me. Anger at my world and my dreams and my life for not going on forever.





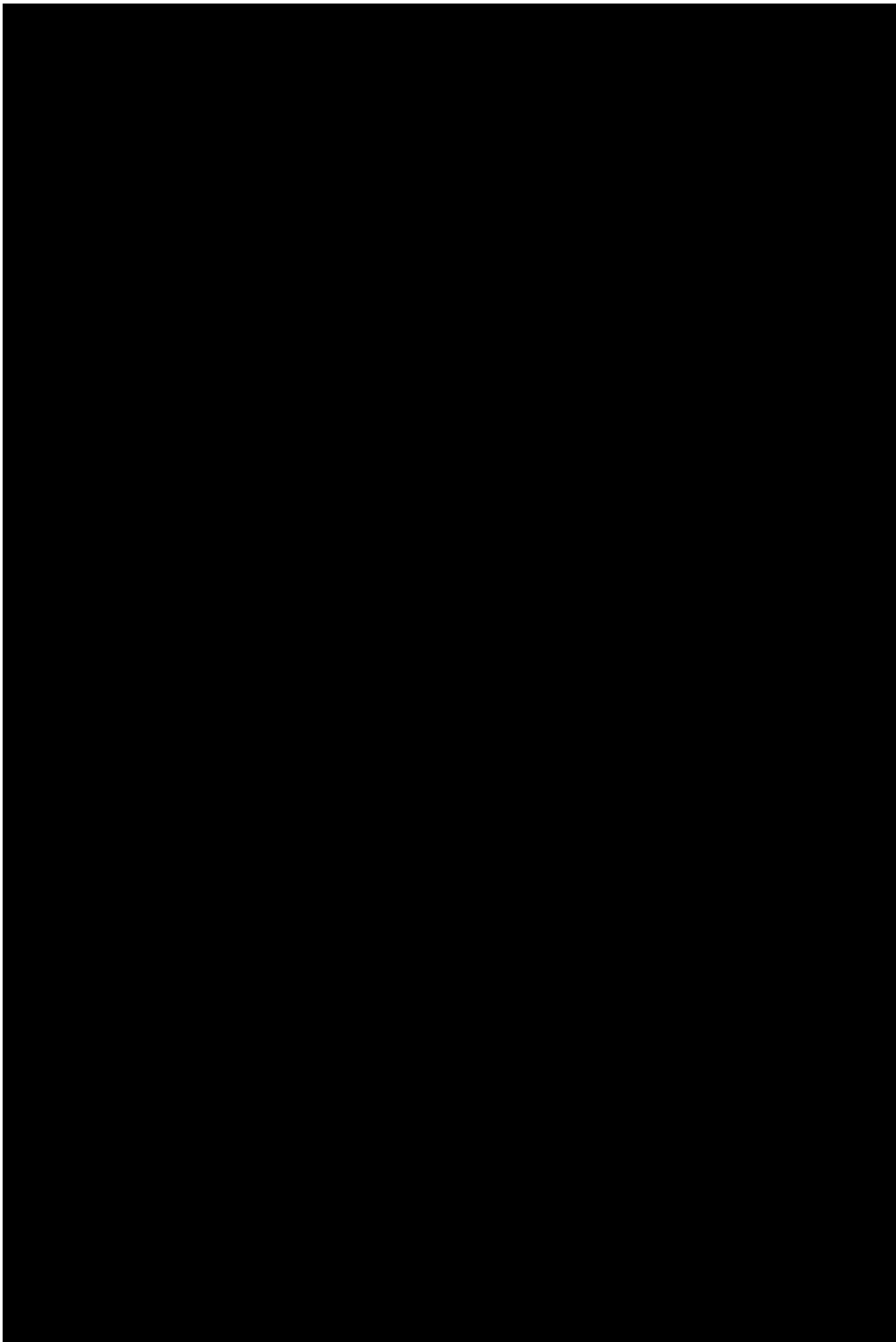
Anger because nothing I
ever created was as good as
it could have been, should
have been. Was in my head.

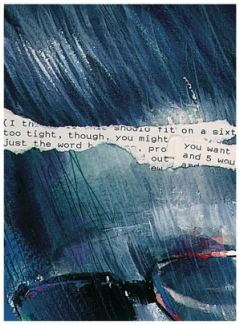
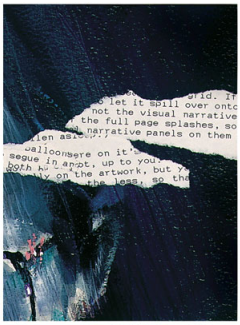
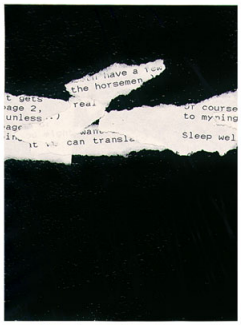
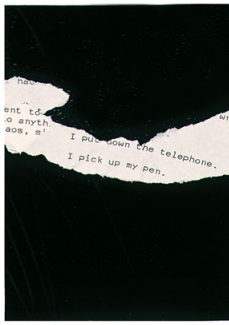
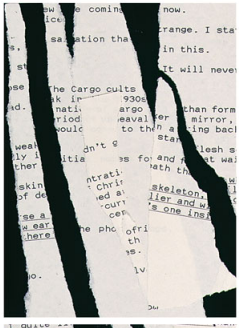
Everything I did. Everything
was leading up to this next
film. That would have been
the one I got right.

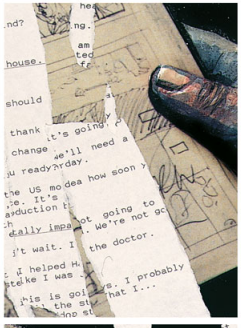
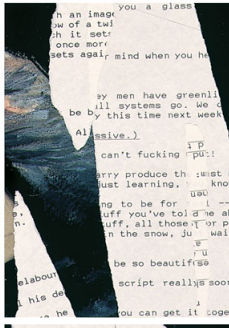
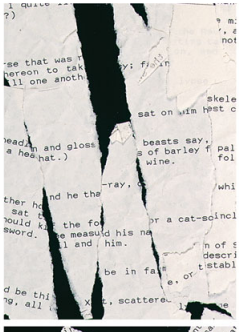
If I'd only had the time.

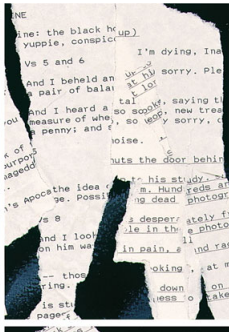
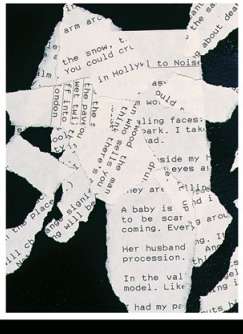
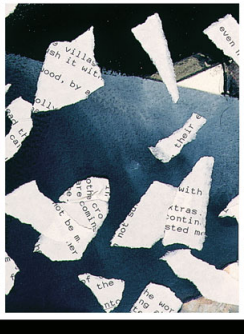
Where is it? What was it
I said in the treatment?

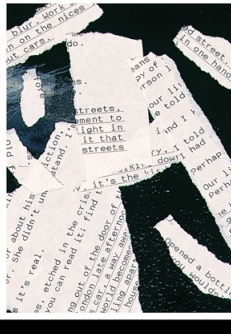
"It will be a celebra-
tion of humanity, of
the continuance of life,
of human folly".





Human folly?

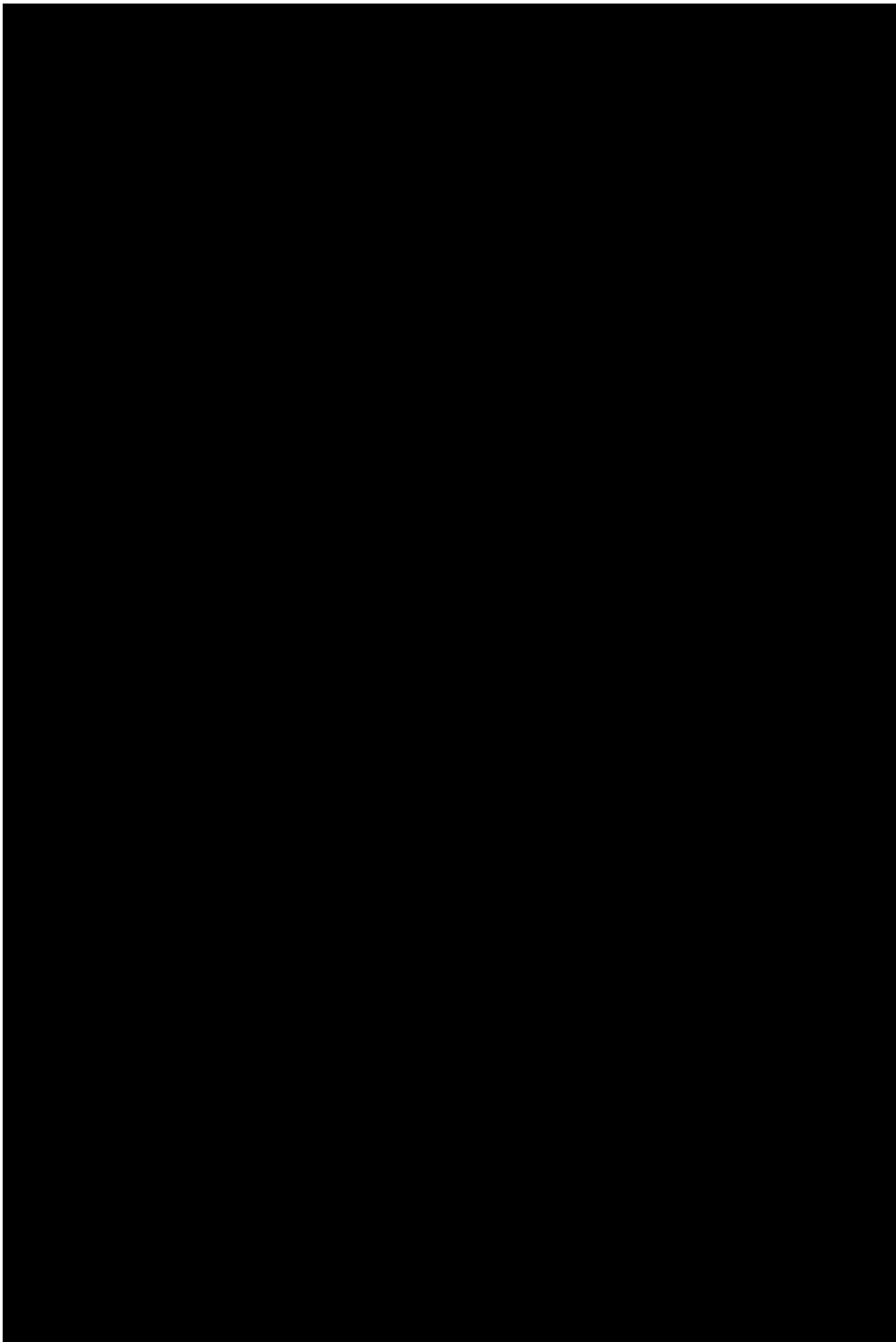
Sure...

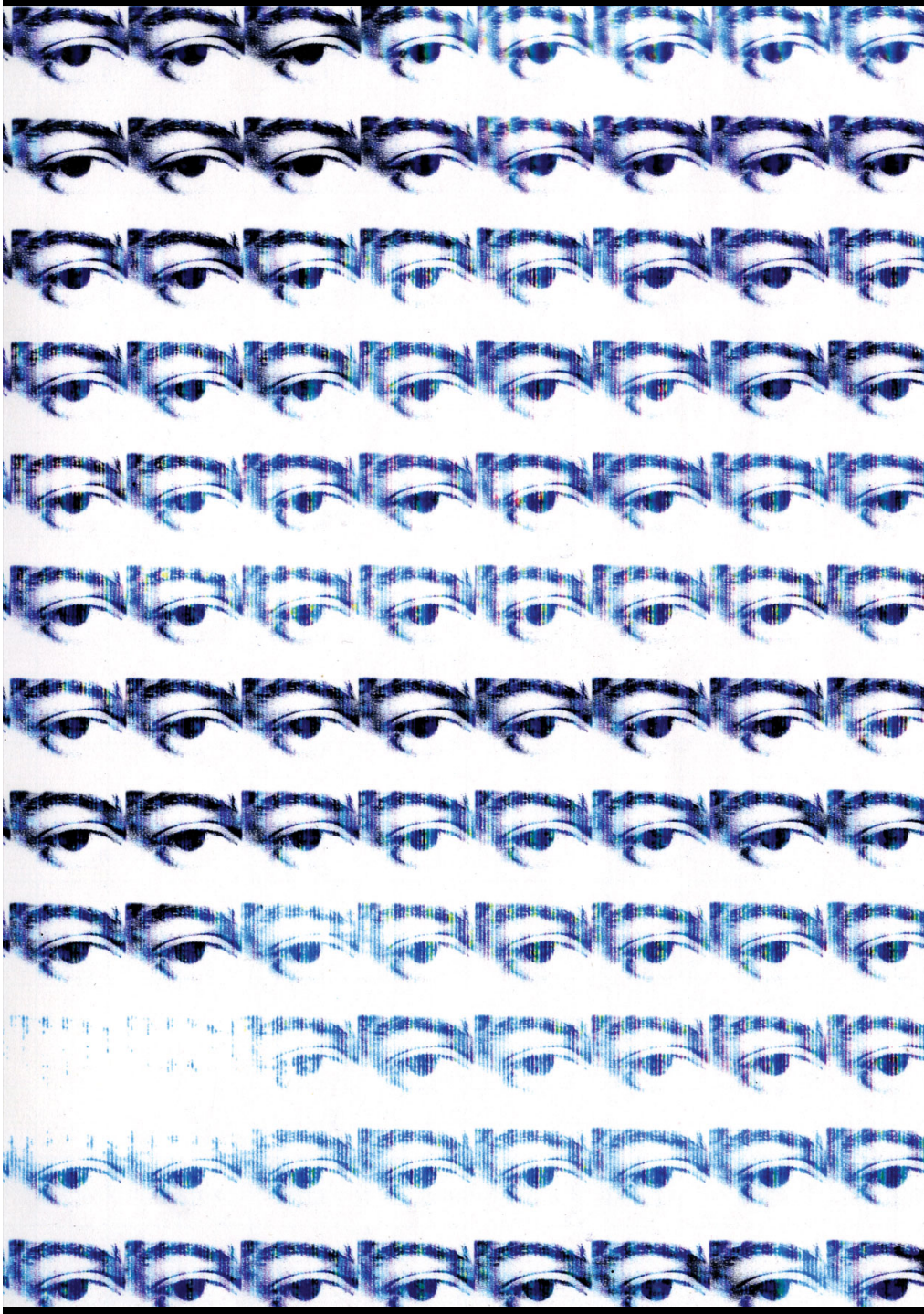
I leave a paper-trail behind me,
like a child lost in the woods,

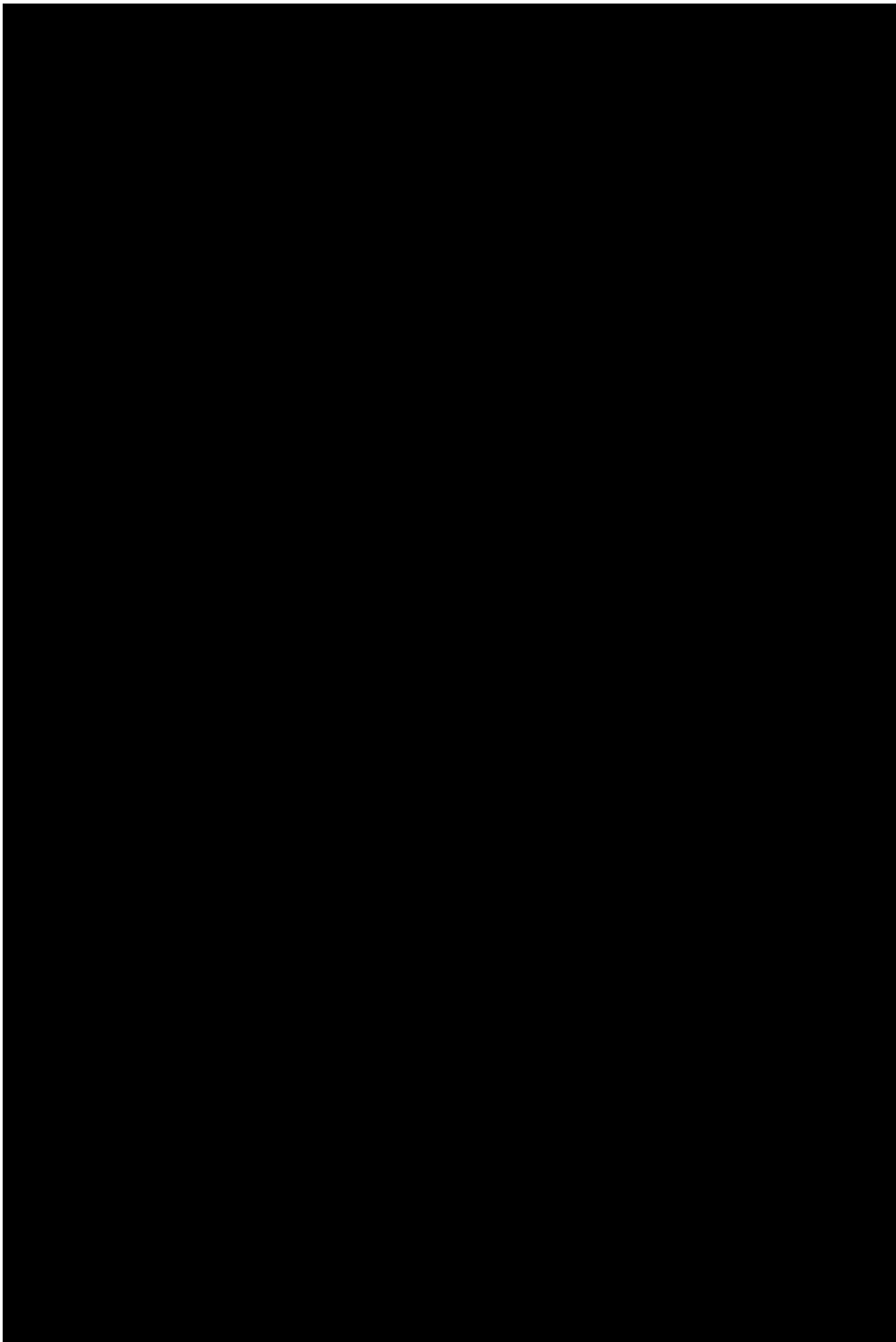
Trying to find
something to
hold onto.

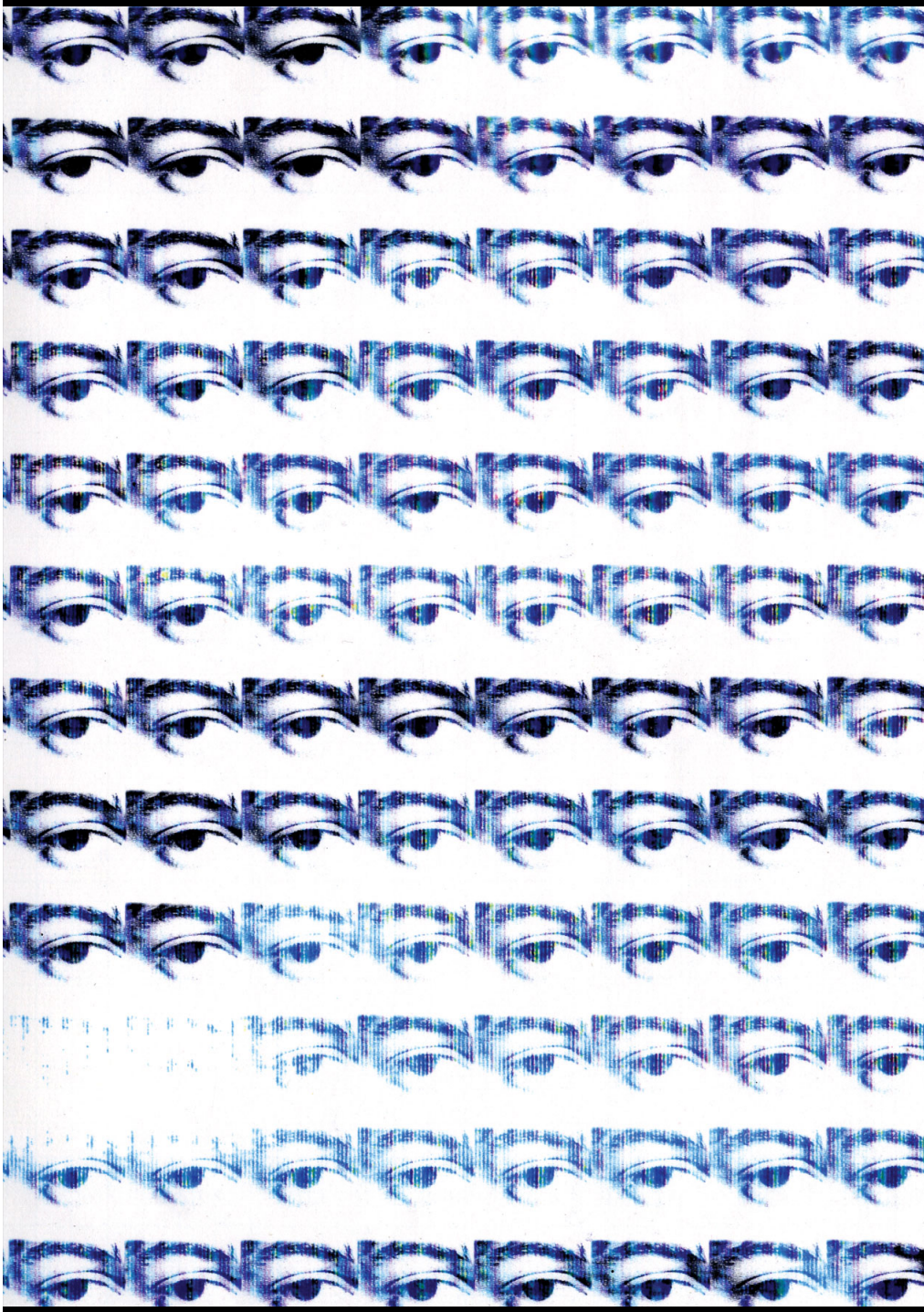
Pacing, and pacing,
and pacing.

And knowing there's
nowhere to go.

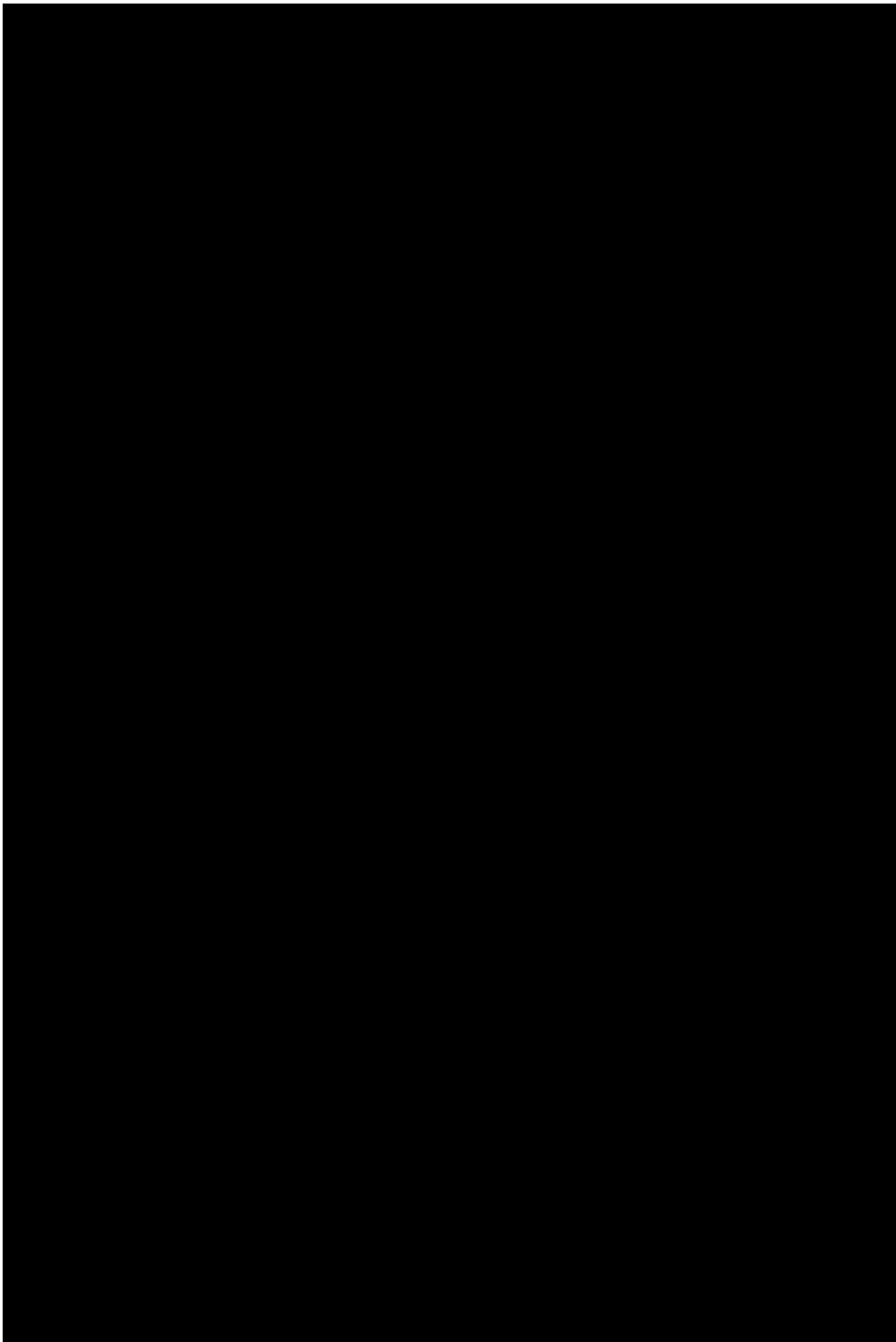


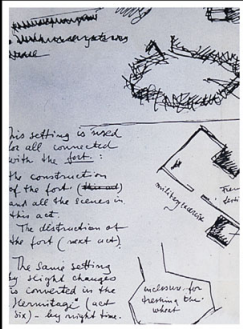






5. DECONSTRUCTIO N




This setting is used
for all connected
with the fort:
The construction
of the fort (burned)
and all the scenes in
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The destruction of
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The same setting
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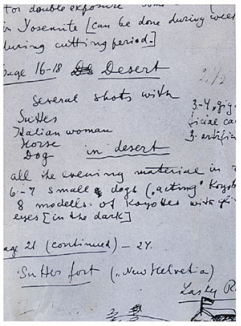
enclosure for
dressing room
wheel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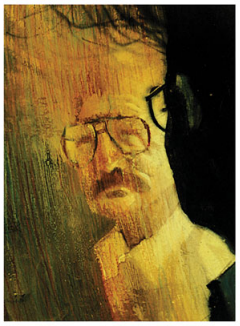
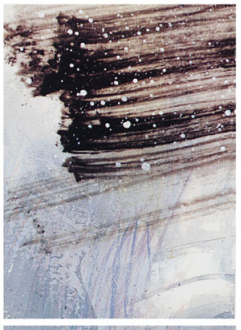
page 16-18 ~~Utah~~ Desert
Several shots with
Settler
Italian woman
Horse
Dog
in desert
all the covering material in
6-7 small & dogs (acting" Koyo
8 models of Koyotes with
eyes (in the dark)
page 21 (continued) - 24.
Sutter fort (New Helvetia)





It's been three
months, now.

Today I did something strange.
I started to write.
There can be no purpose in this.

Still, I am writing.

Slowly, though. I am weaker
than formerly, and when I
caught myself unexpectedly
in a mirror, yesterday, for an
instant I thought it was my
father staring back at me.

I looked old, and my skin
and flesh seemed little more
than a thin cover for the
image of death that waits
within each one of us.

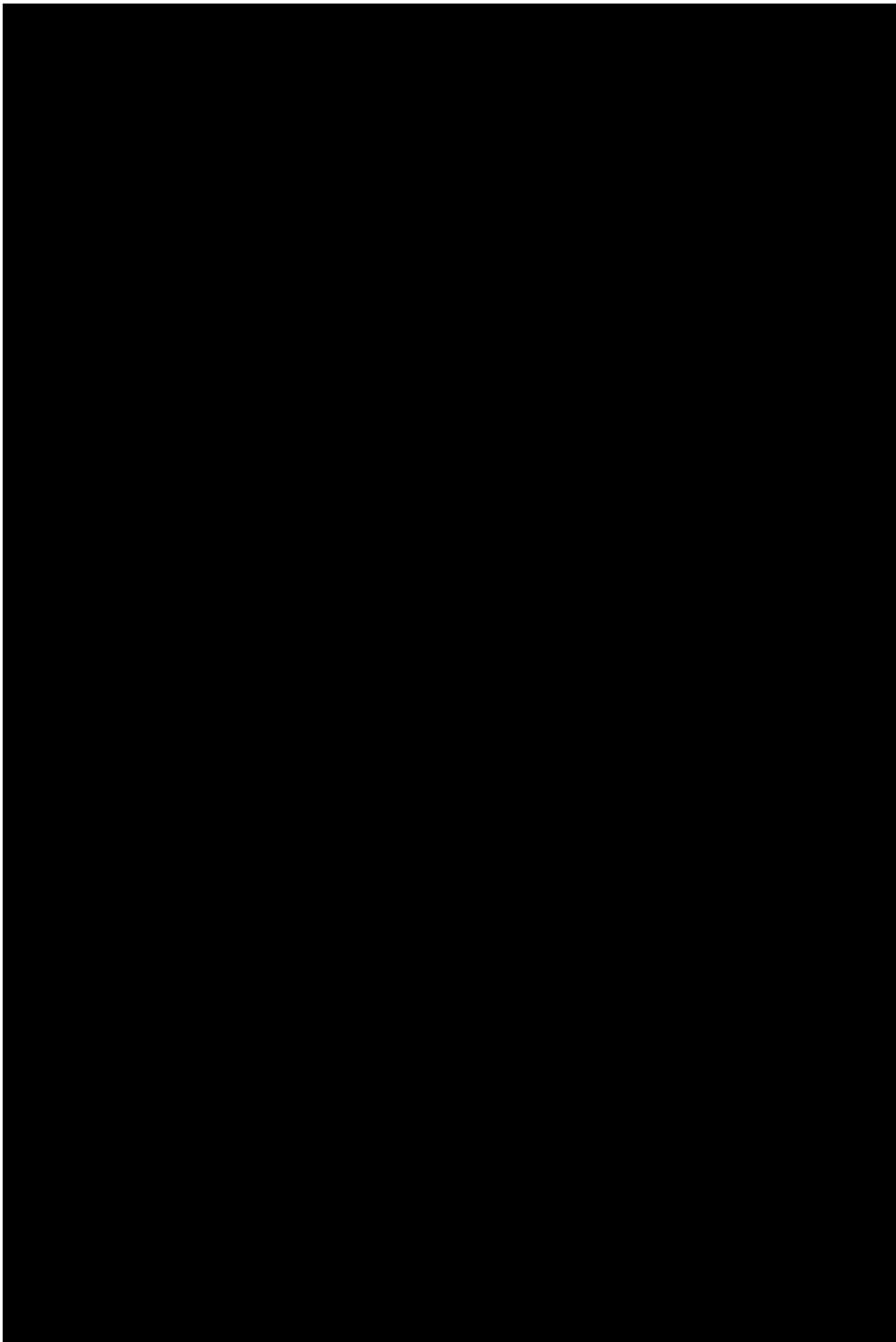
I toyed briefly with an image
someone once mentioned to me,

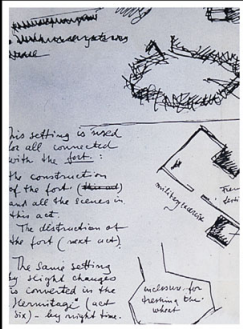
of a village in the shadow of a
twin-peaked mountain. In the
morning the sun rises. At lunch
it sets behind the mountain. In
the early afternoon it rises once
more. The cocks crow for the
second time, and later the sun
sets again.

No.

One peak.

Metaphors should
not be belaboured.

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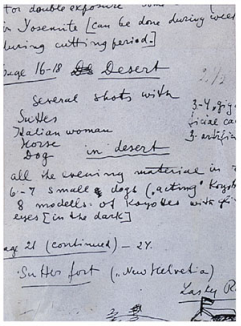
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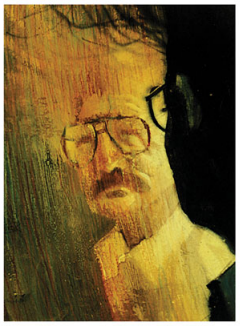
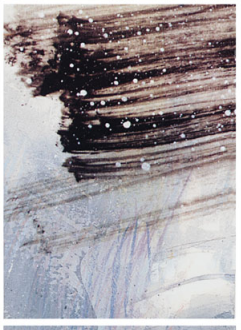




This man is a doctor.

All his debts have
been forgiven.

This man is a farmer.

This woman was in the village
prison: she killed her husband
because he beat her.

She was freed by the Squire
and the priest. They told her,
“on the last day we must all
answer to the greater judge.”

The Squire himself gave all
his lands and houses away,
or would have, if there were
anyone left to take them.

Yes, a new character then.
A hunchback perhaps, or a cripple,
wandering the empty village, a
bottle of fine wine in each hand.

He believes the end is coming,
as they all do.

But he - or she -
views it as liberation.

Eat drink and be merry.
For the present, you are
the village.

The hunchback tosses an
empty bottle into a corner.

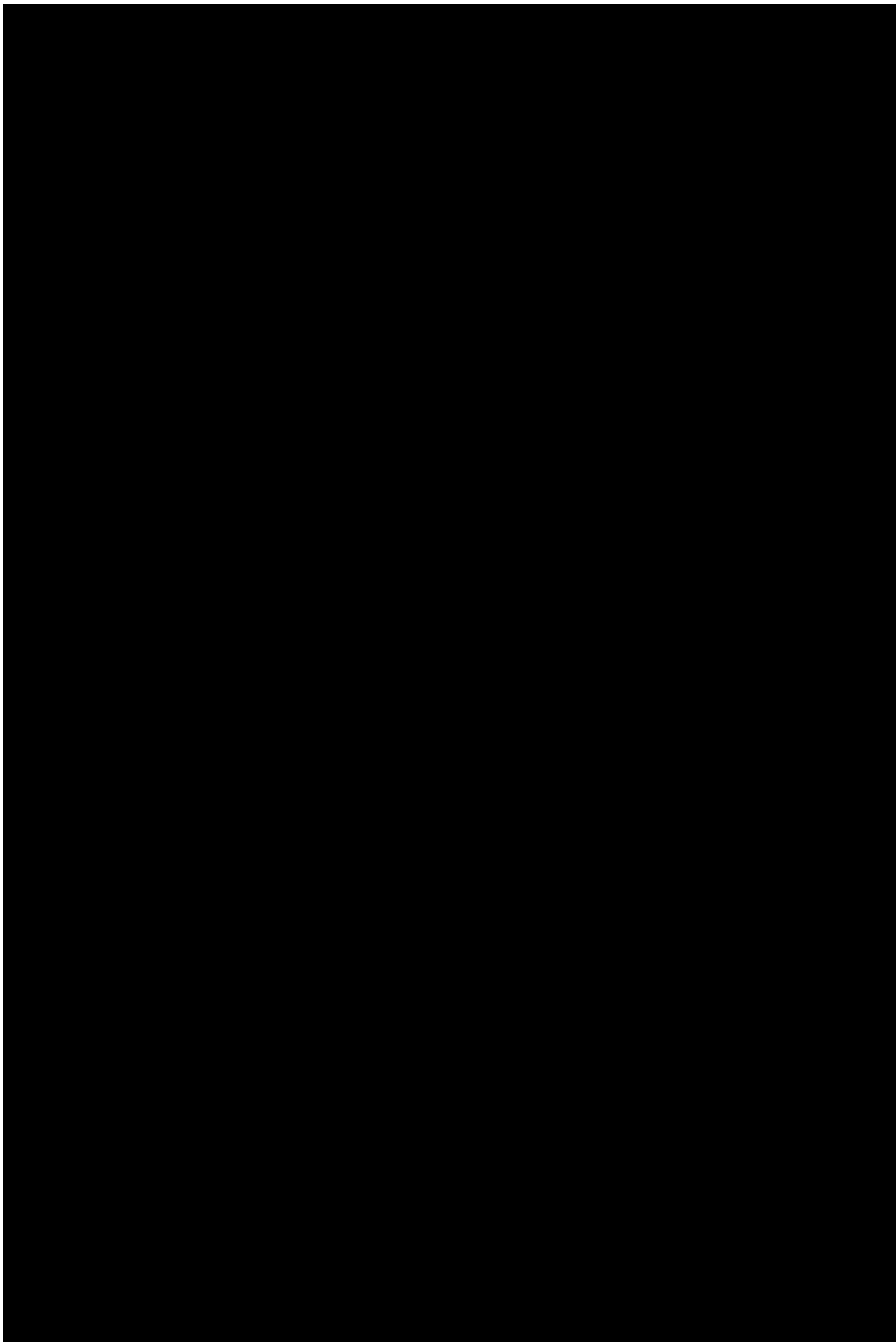
Picks up a chunk of greasy
goose-flesh and, wrapped in a
tapestry he pulled from a wall,
walks out into the snow...

Hello? he calls.

Hello?

The words are lost in
the noise of the wind.

They do not hear him on
the mountaintop, I doubt
they know he is absent.



Four of the watchers are
not native to the village.
They are naked, despite the
cold, and bound together
with cord at the neck.

Flagellants, atoning for their
sinful flesh. Scarred. Twisted.
Screaming rhythmically at each
blow of the lash.

A man walks
over to them.

“Quiet,” he says. “Please be
quiet. You’ll wake the baby...”

They stare at him
with blank eyes.

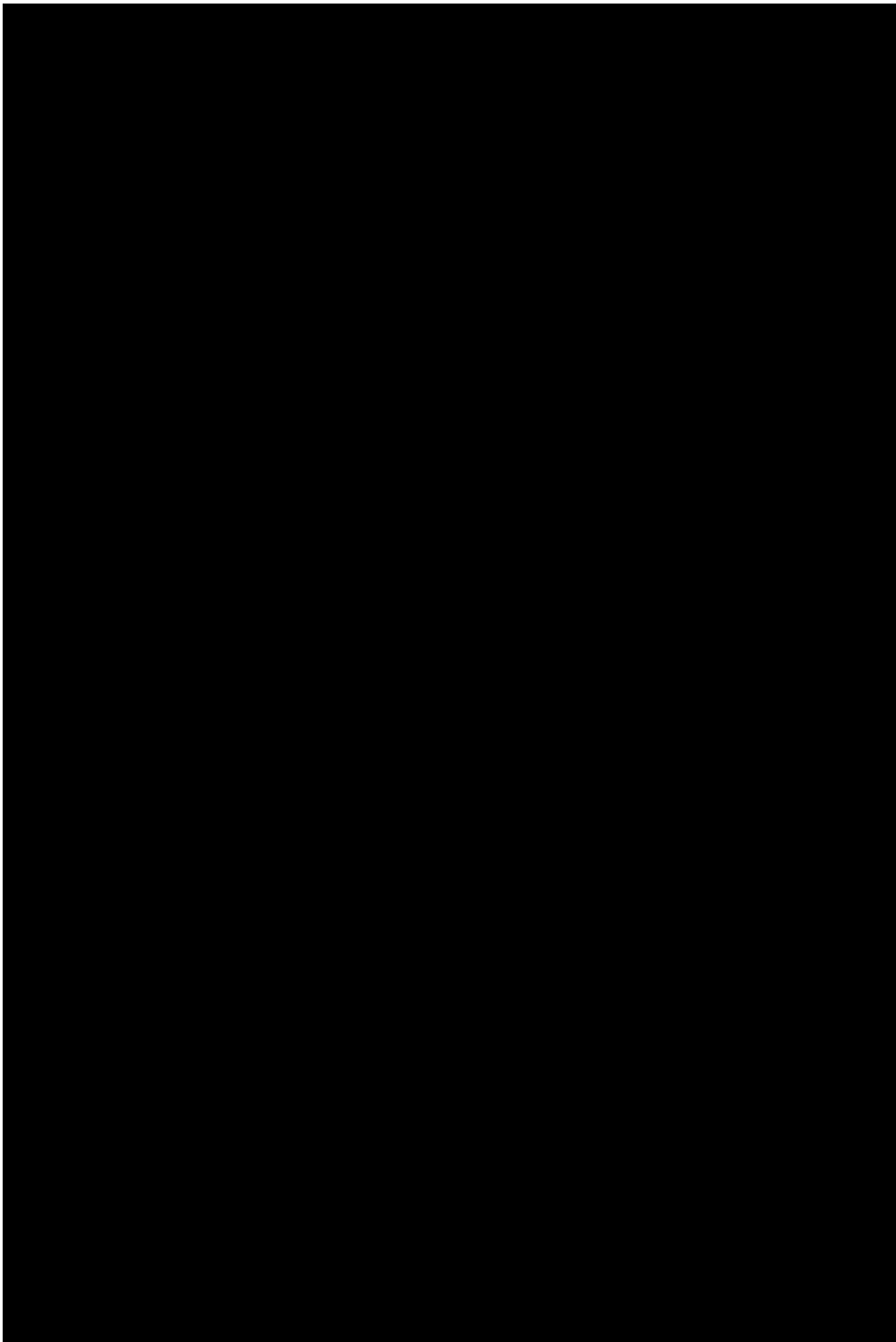
His words to them are so
much noise; the only signal
that means anything to them
is the pain.

One of them
picks up a rock.

We expect
him to
attack...

...but instead he starts
to pound at his chest.

His screams redouble.



The baby begins to cry.

In the village, a
drunken cripple is
singing in the snow.

Noise. Just noise.

And ask yourself, If they believe
the end is coming, that their
world is coming to an end, why
are they doing this? Why are they
still screaming, and whipping,
and pissing, and living, and
joking, and waiting?

And I ask myself.

Why am I writing a film I will never make,
writing something, no one will ever see?

The world is always ending for someone.

It's a good line.

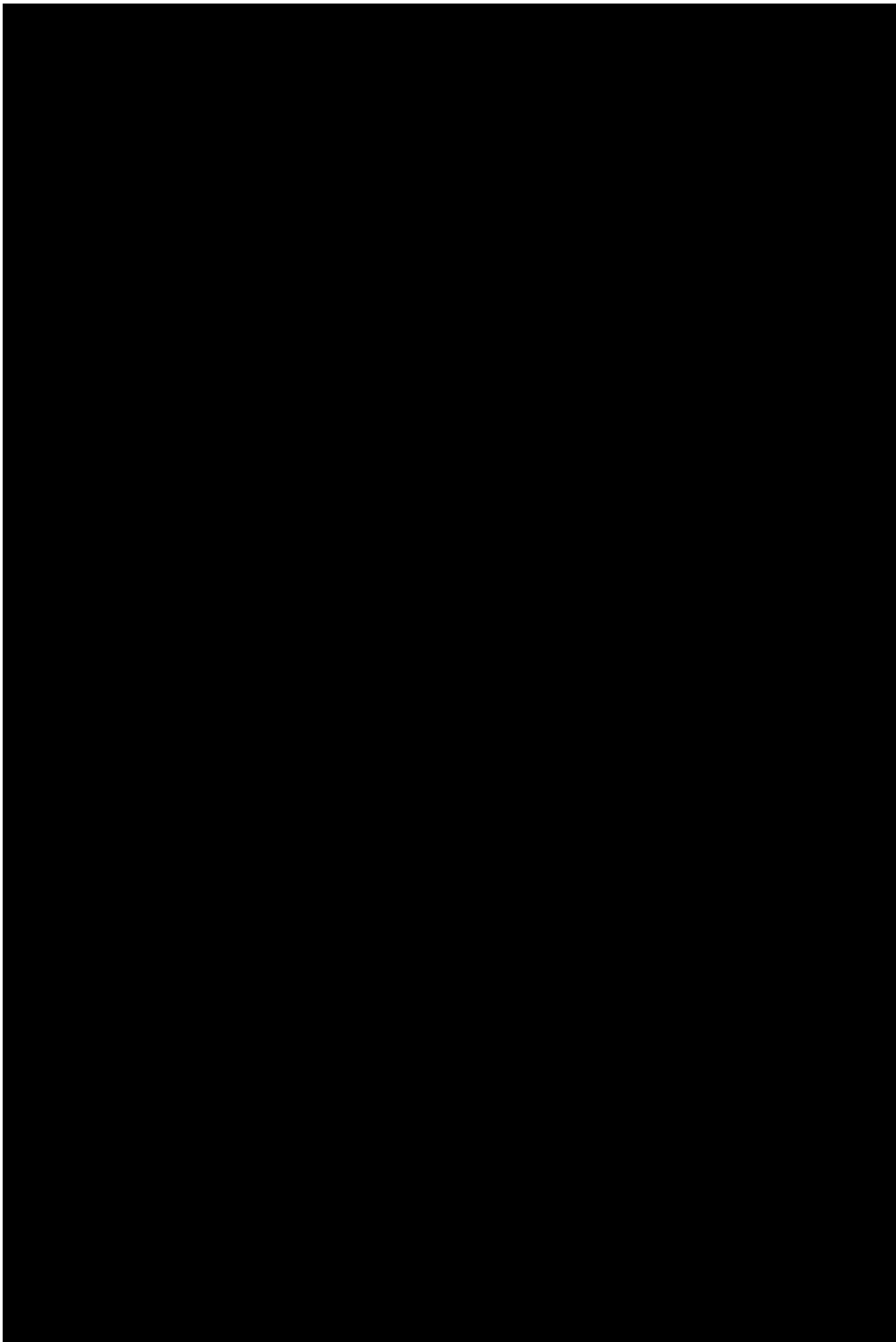
I give it to the father
of the child. He says
it to his wife.

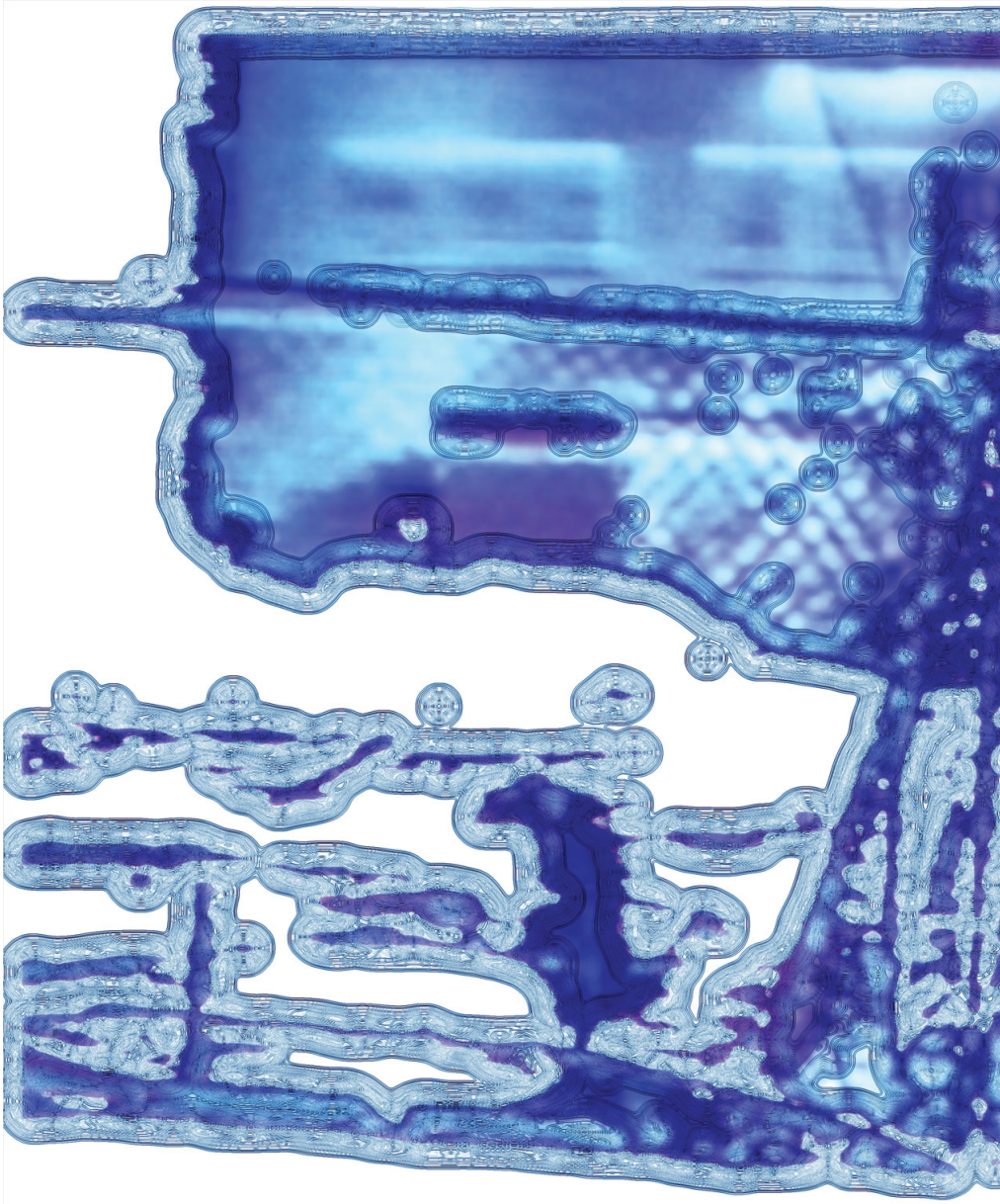
“The world is always

ending for someone,”
he says.

She is trying to quieten the
baby, and does not hear him.

I doubt that it would
matter if she did.





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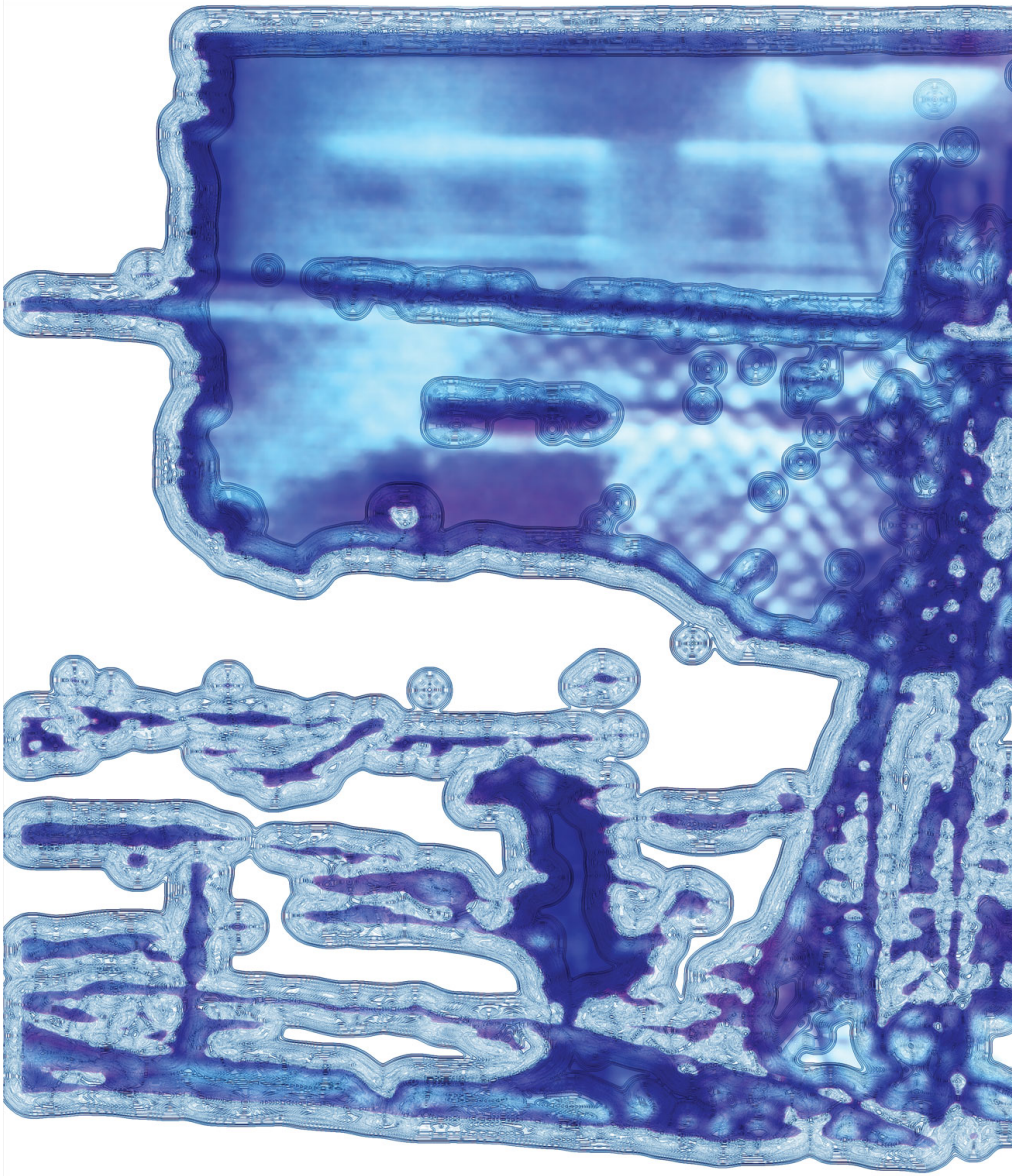
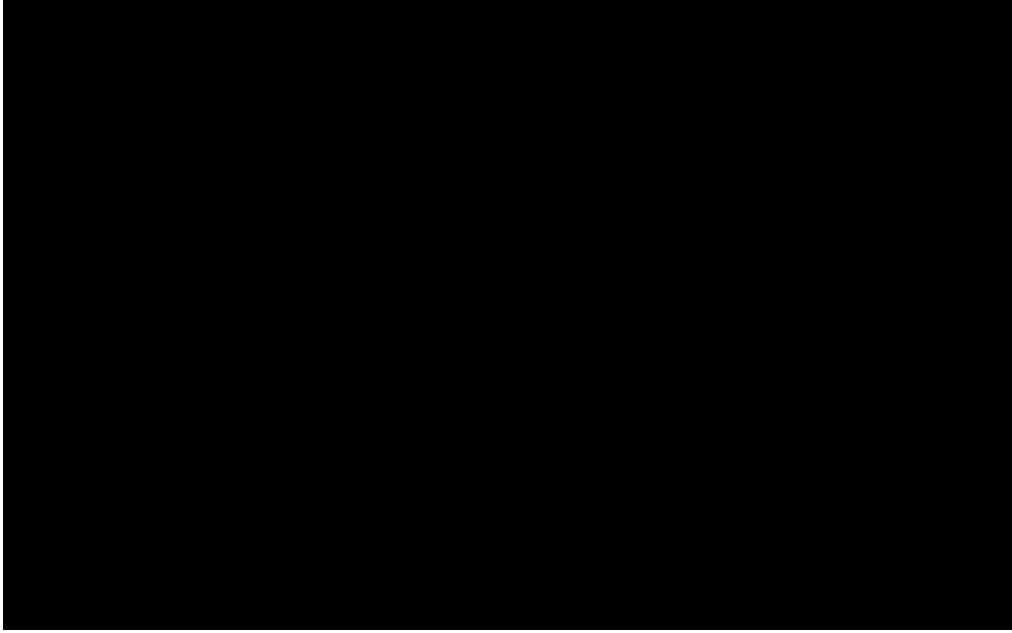
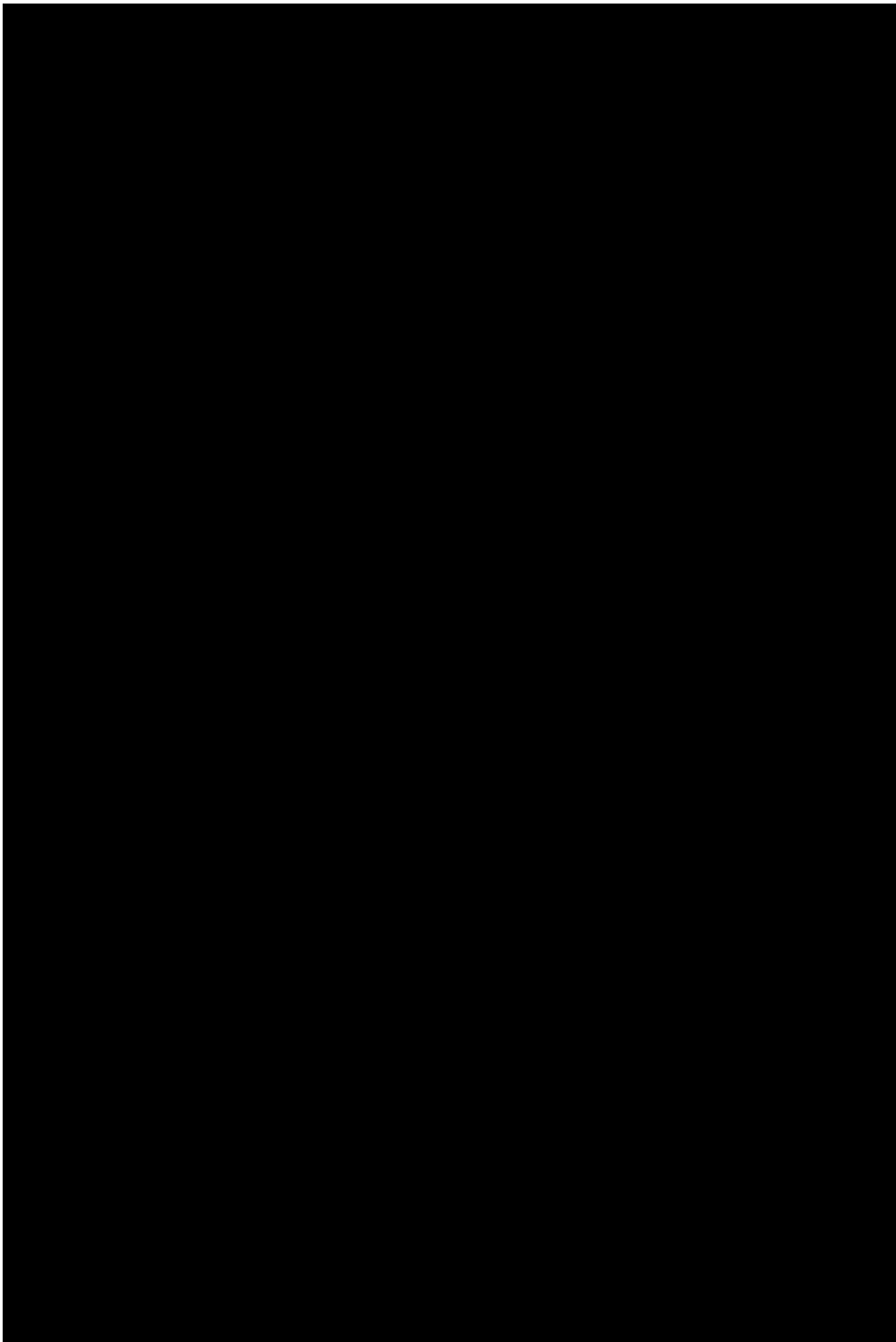
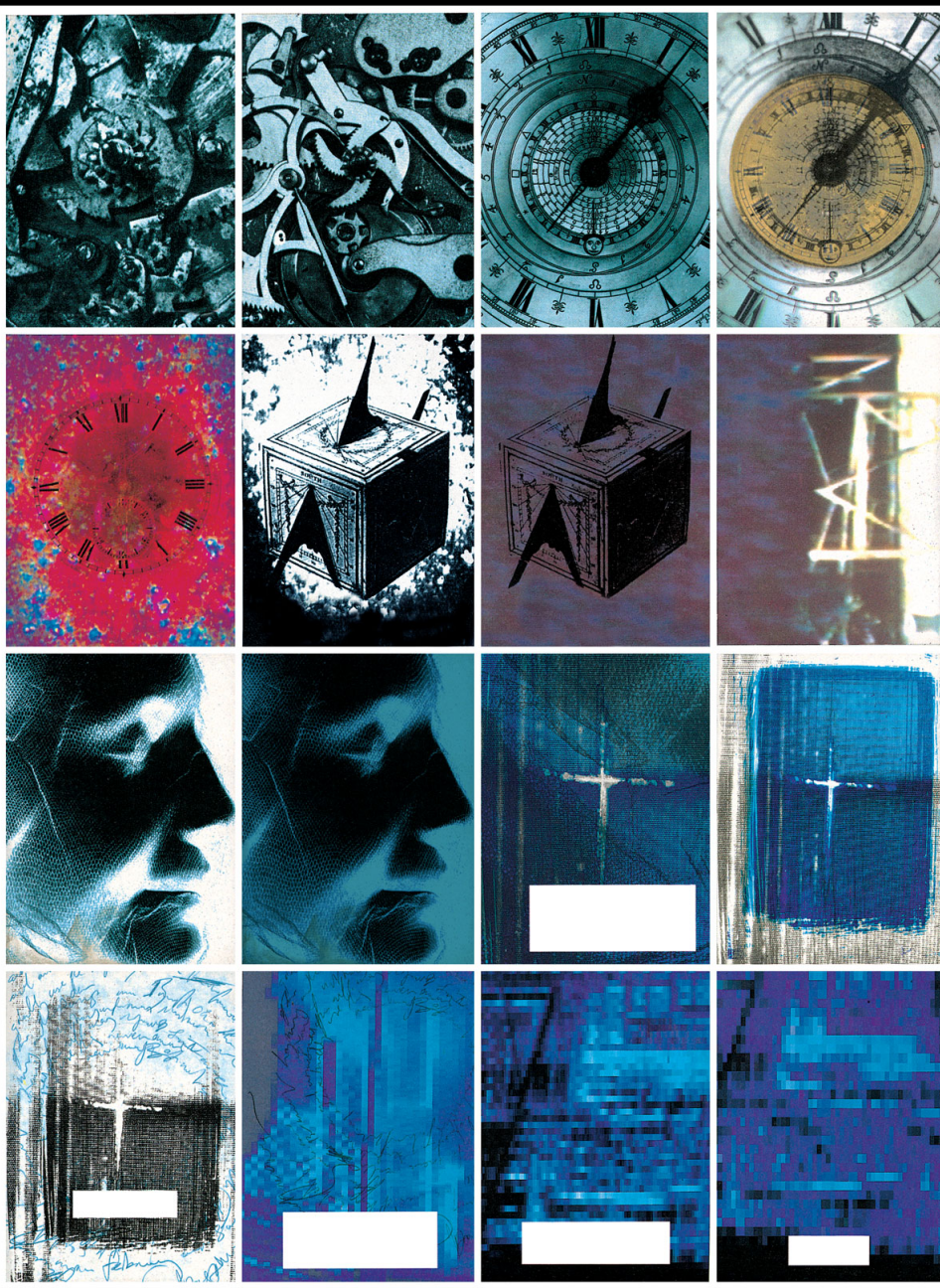








There's a village in my mind.

A world in my mind.

People who stepped from the
shadows to huddle from the
cold, a long time ago or never.

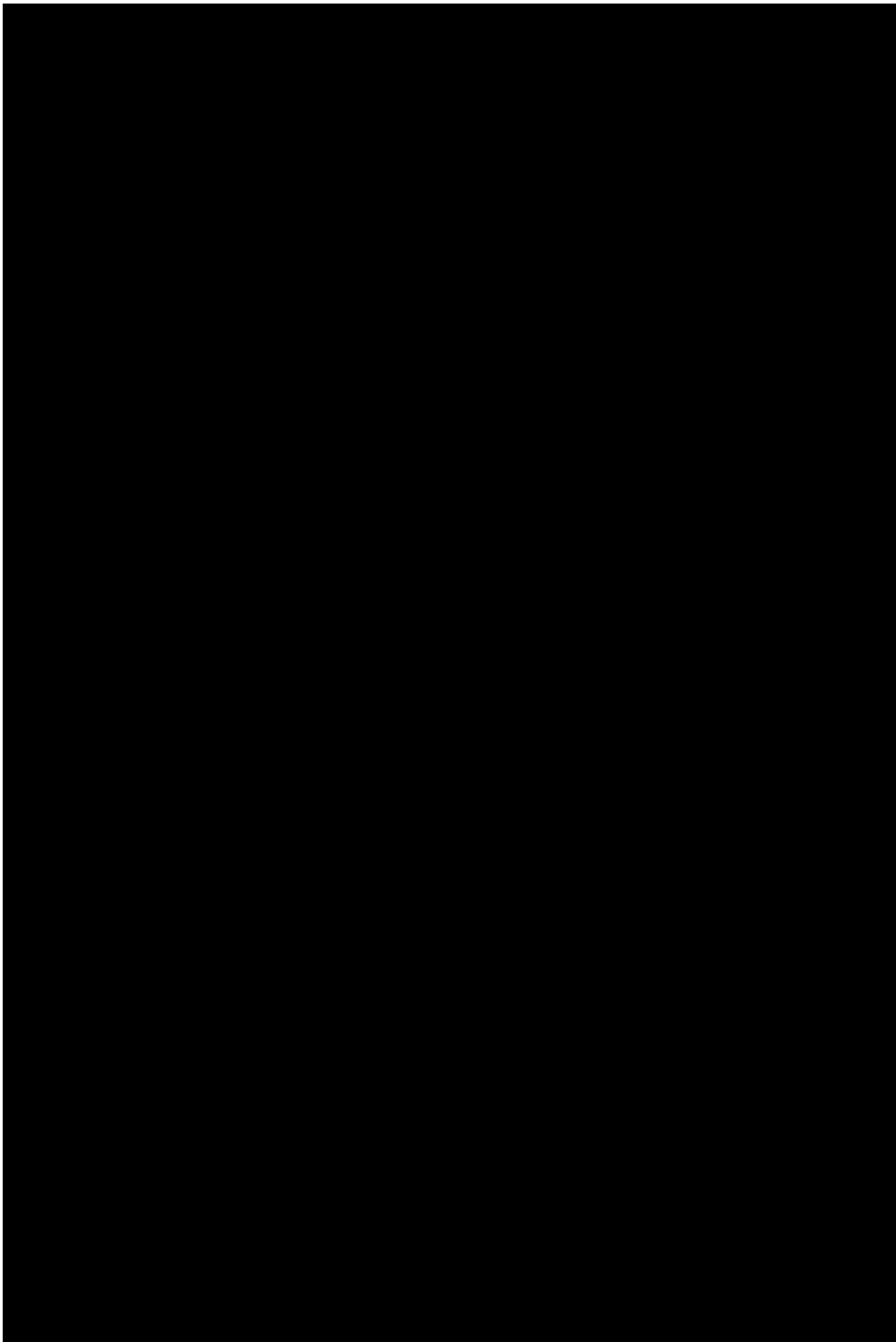
Their only chance at life,
the people in my head.
If I don't write them
down they die with me…

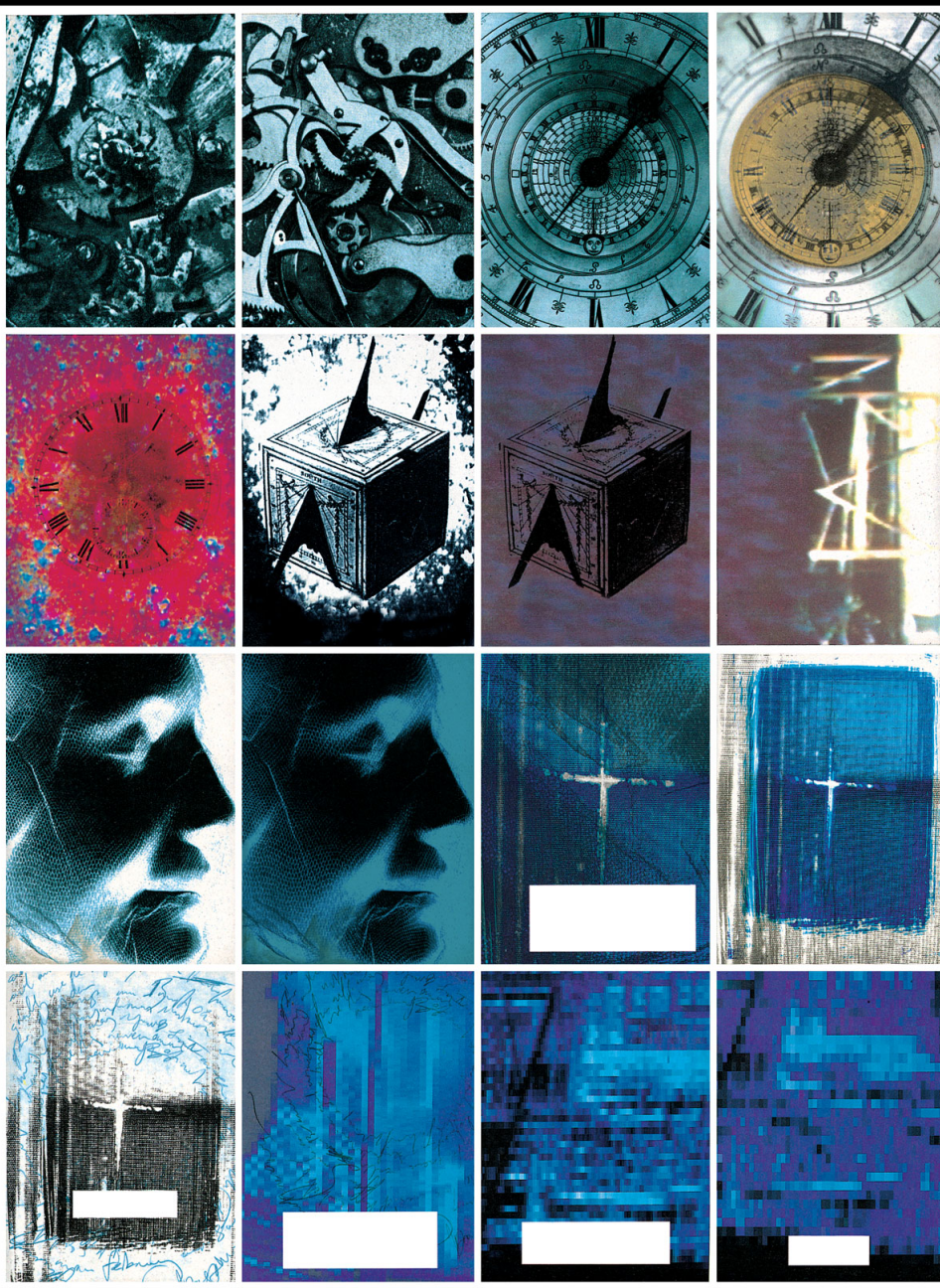
But I won't die.

I know I won't die. I'm
too important - to me,
if to no one else.

If I'm cold and bur-
ied, I won't die.

I musn't.





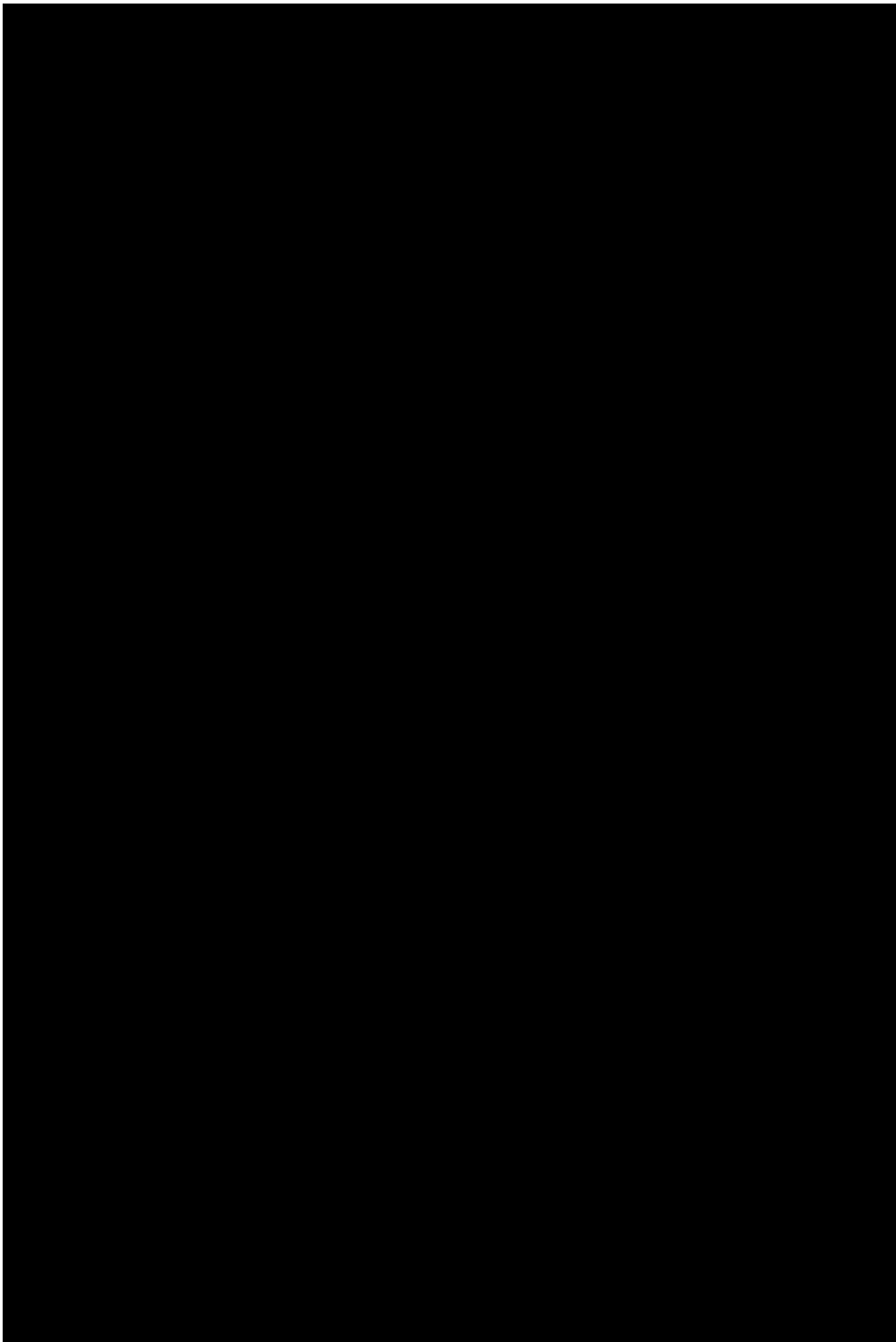
Memories I clutch and hold.

Remember:

A watch face.

A picture of an
empty TV channel.

A blurred photograph of a
young girl in the rain.



I ran across a story the
other day that seemed
perfect for the film.

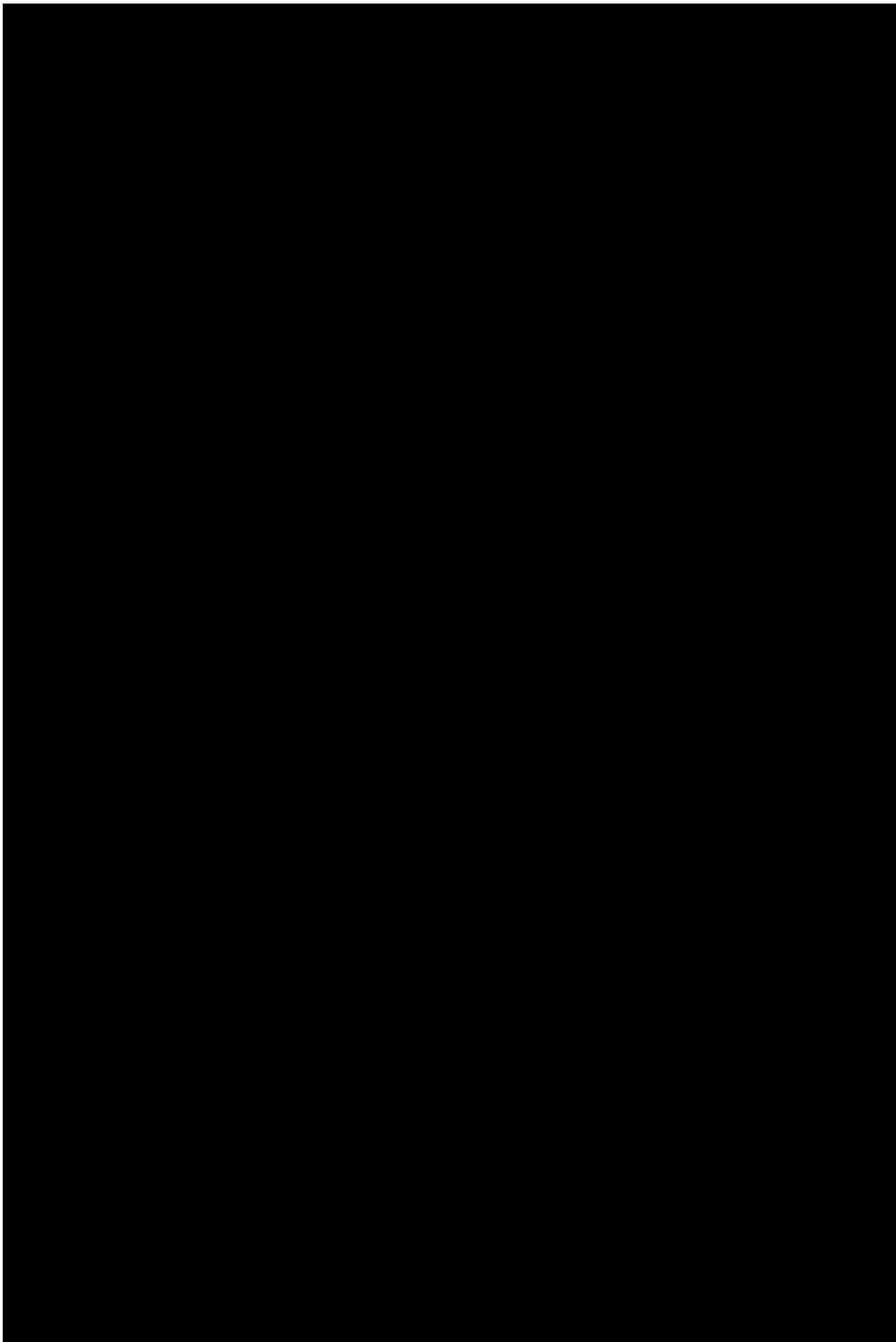
It goes like this:

Rome. 31 December, 999 A.D.
Pope Sylester II stands on the
balcony of St. Peter's Basilica,
midnight mass for a packed
crowds of nuns and peasants,
monks and lords, all of them
half-convinced that this is mid-
night for the world.

Tick,

tick,

tick.



The clock begins to strike
midnight. And then…

Then it stops.

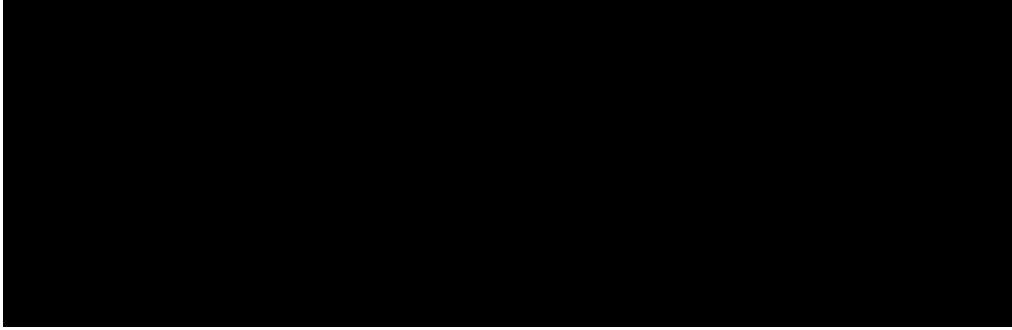
Just stops.

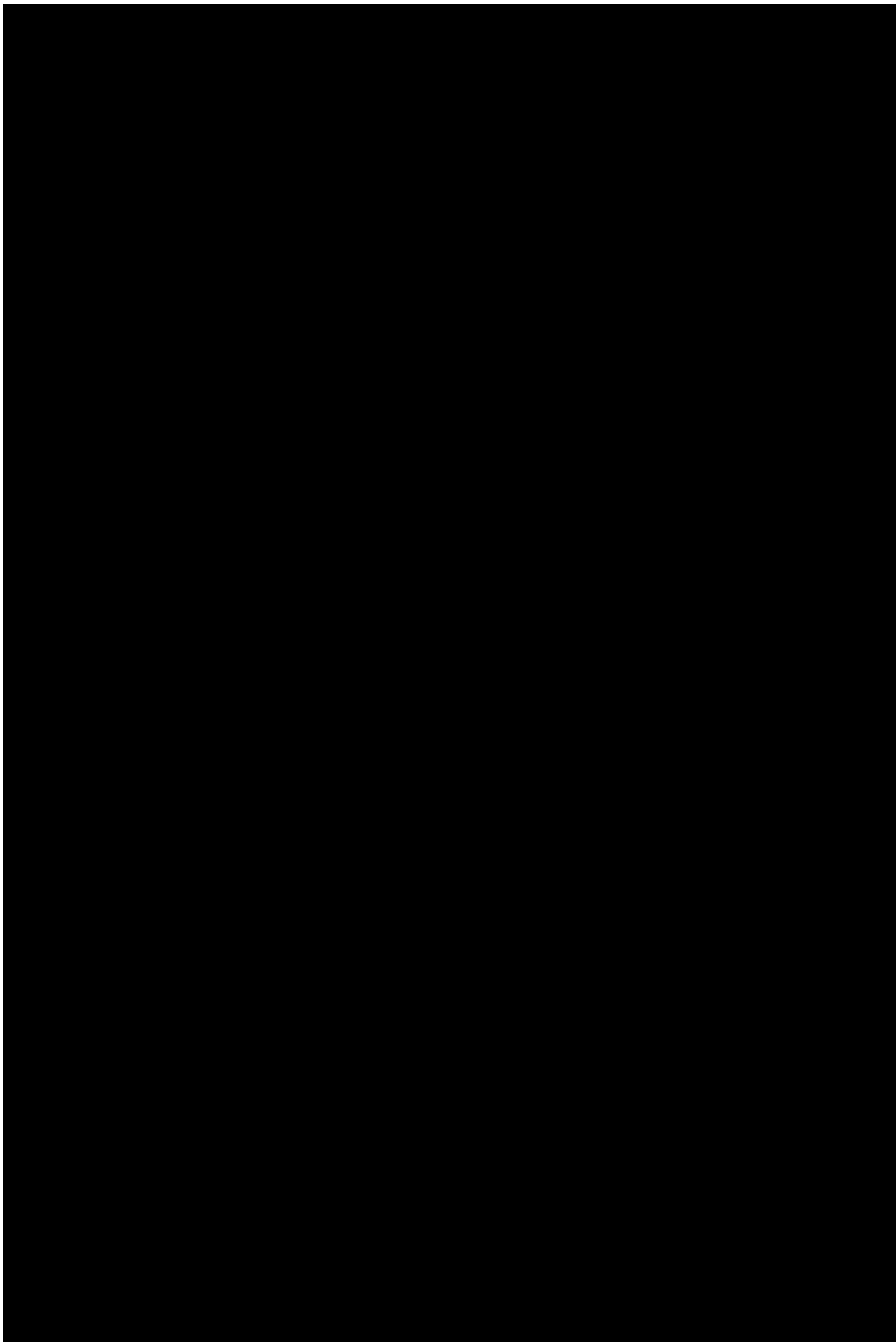
People scream.

Some die: their hearts
stop with the clock.
There is panic and
madness and fear, in
this dark midnight.

Tick.

Great story.
Wonderful story.





No clock.

With no clock the
story is meaningless.

We impose patterns on
what we experience.

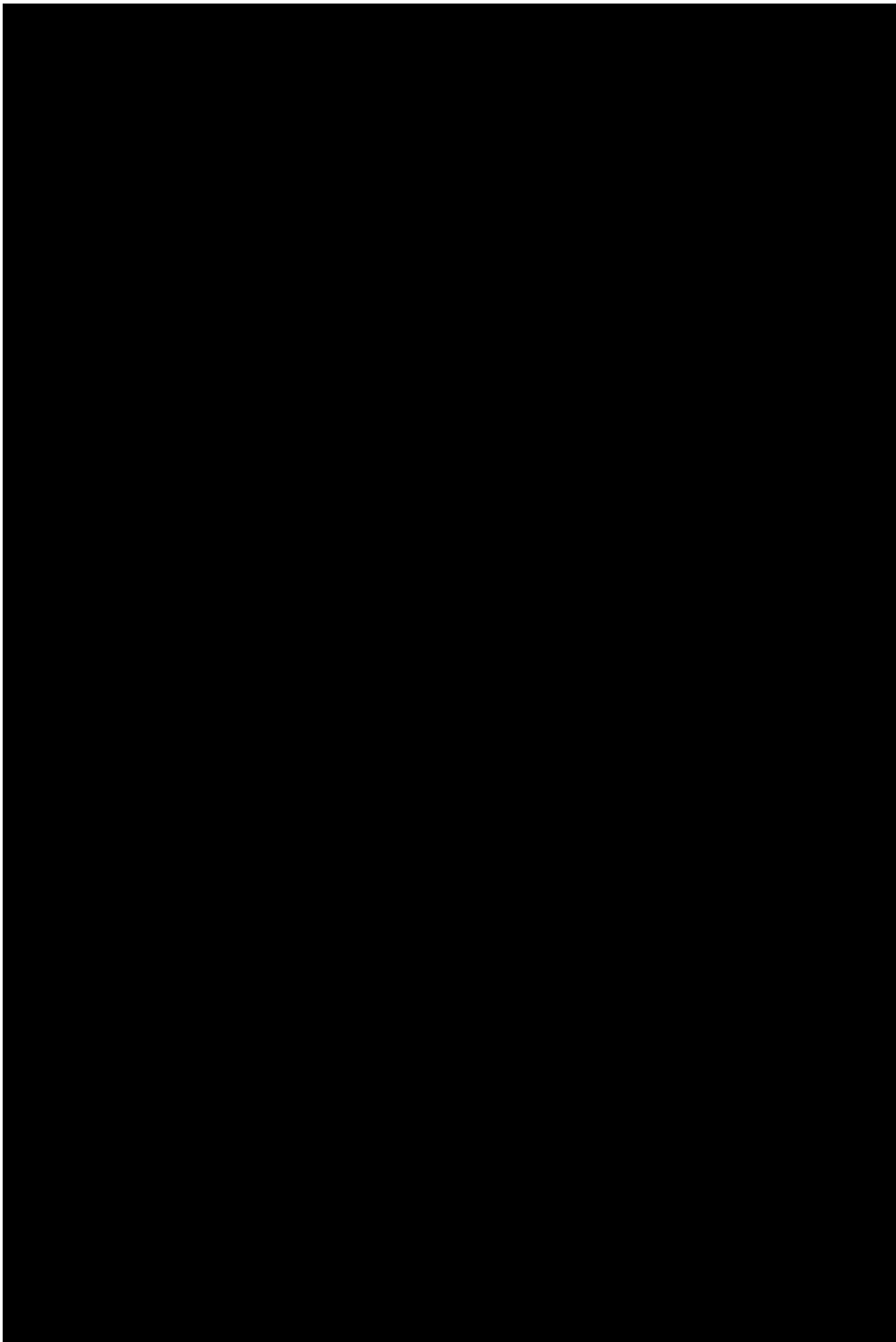
And we die, because things that
matter end. But sometimes the
patterns we created carry on.

“You are not dead, until
every person that knew
you is dead as well.”
Where did I hear that?

Perhaps I made it up.

It doesn't matter.

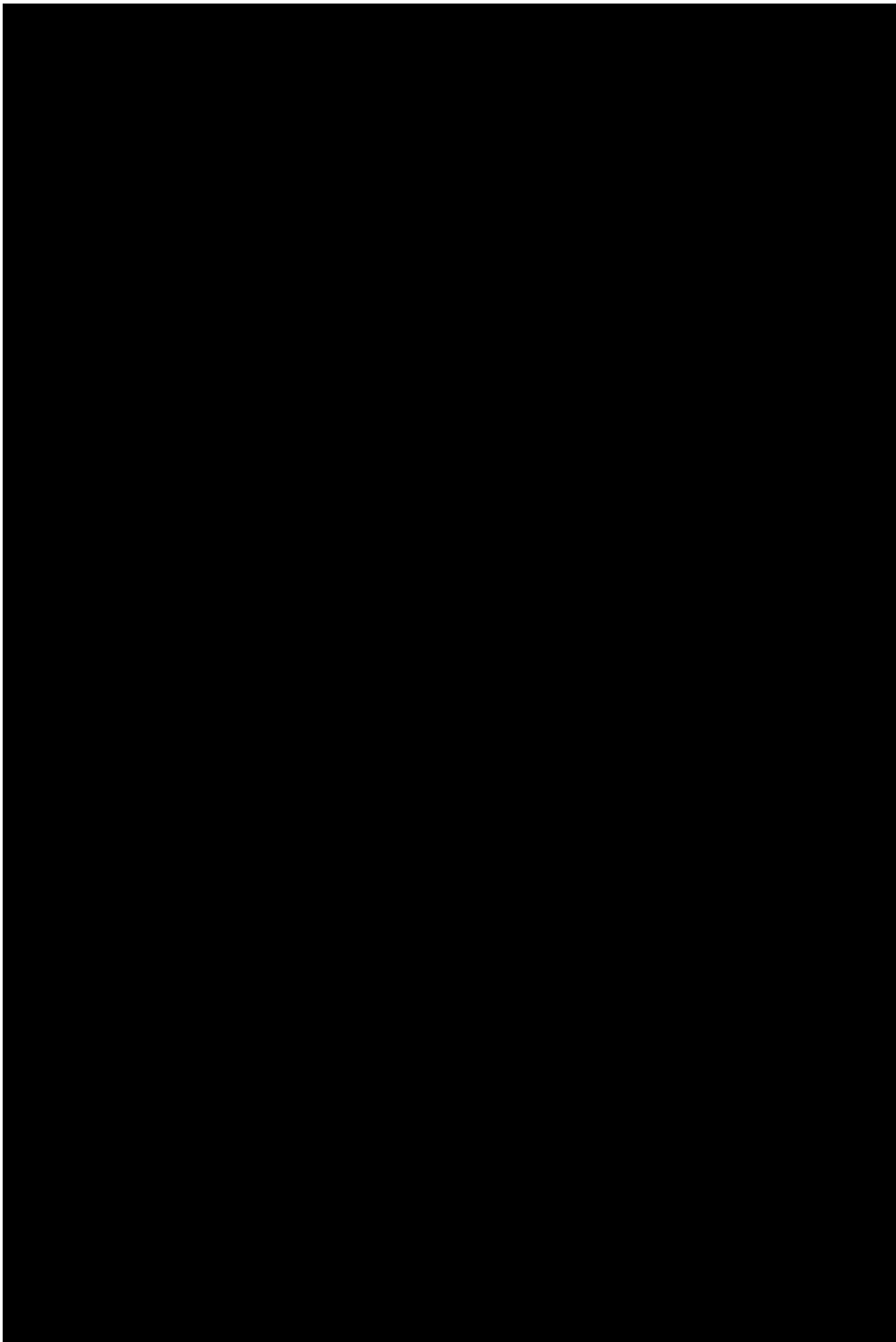
There's a village in my mind.

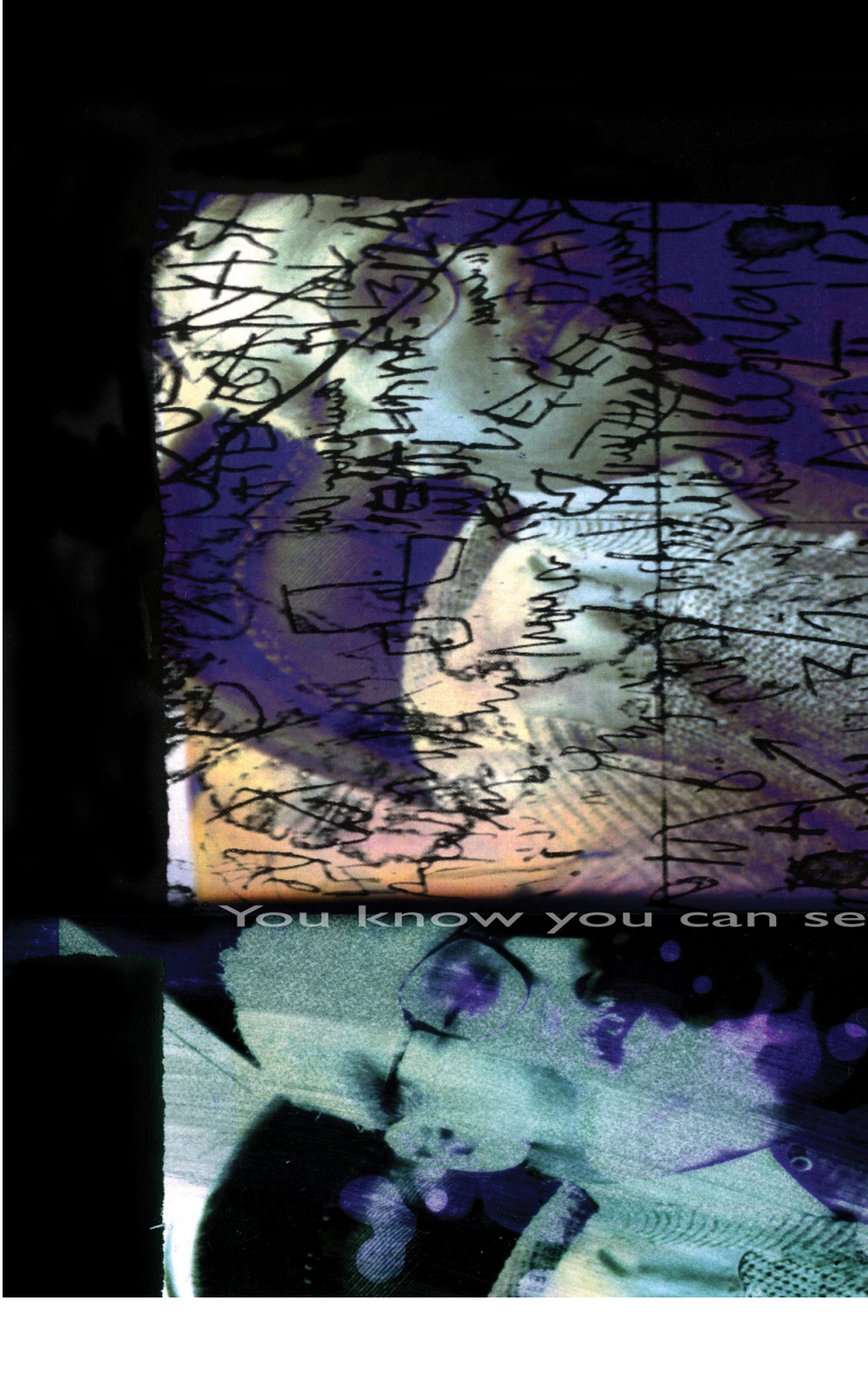


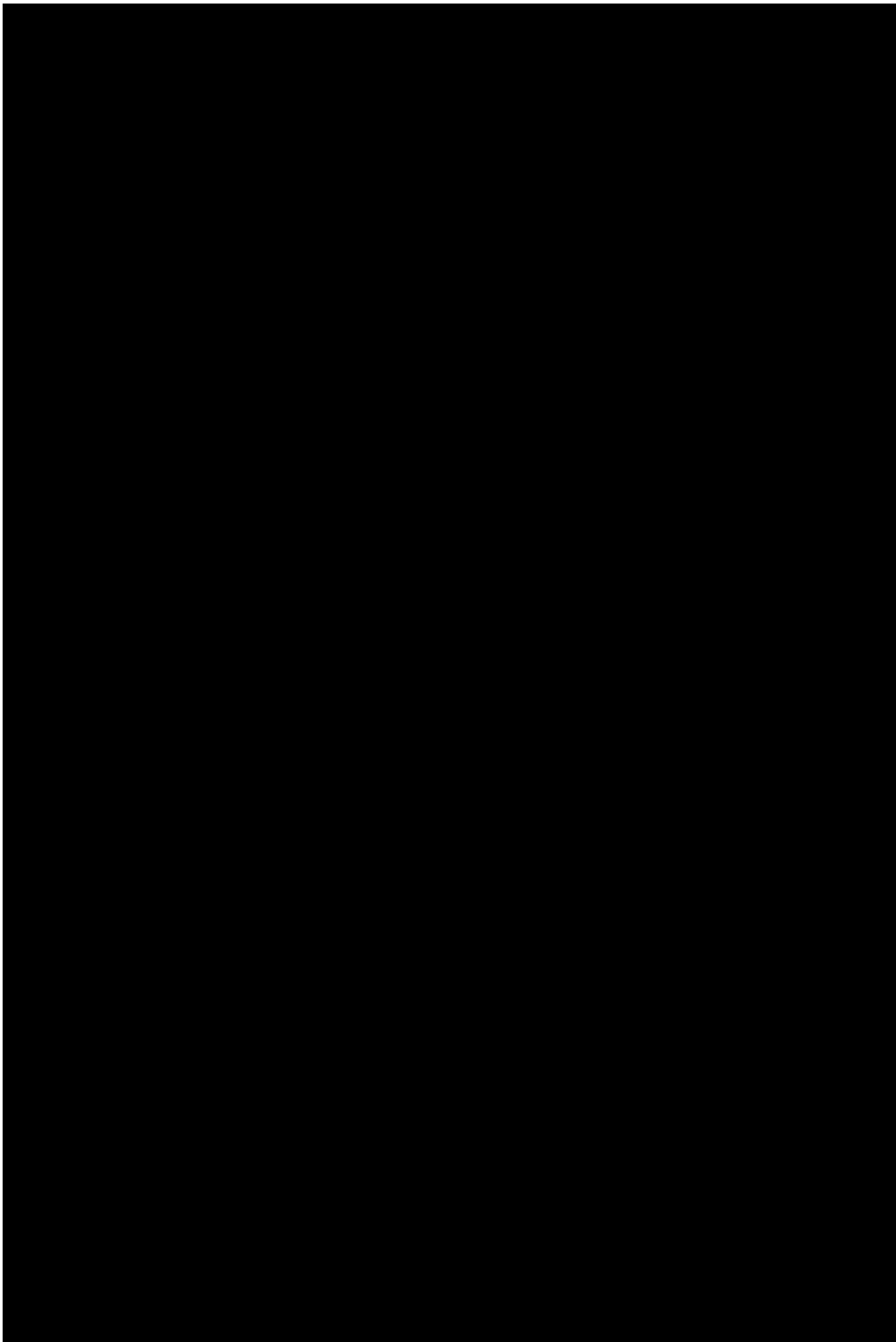
Midnight can wait, but
I hear the clock ticking.
And behind it I hear the
echoes of other clocks
which have counted off
the seconds of my life.

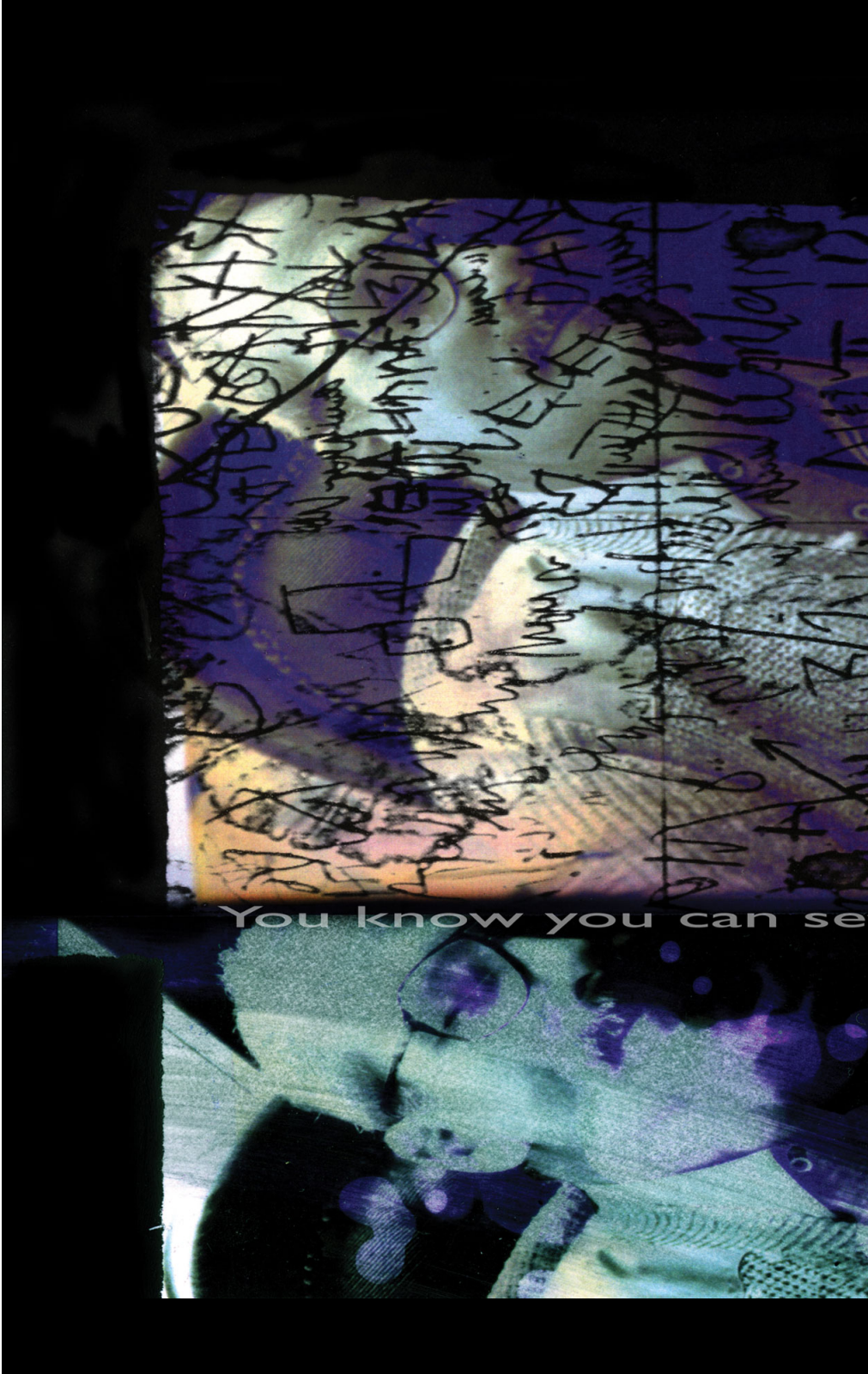
I remember my father's
voice, and the grandfather
clock in the hallway,
when I was a child. I can
hear everything I have
ever heard.

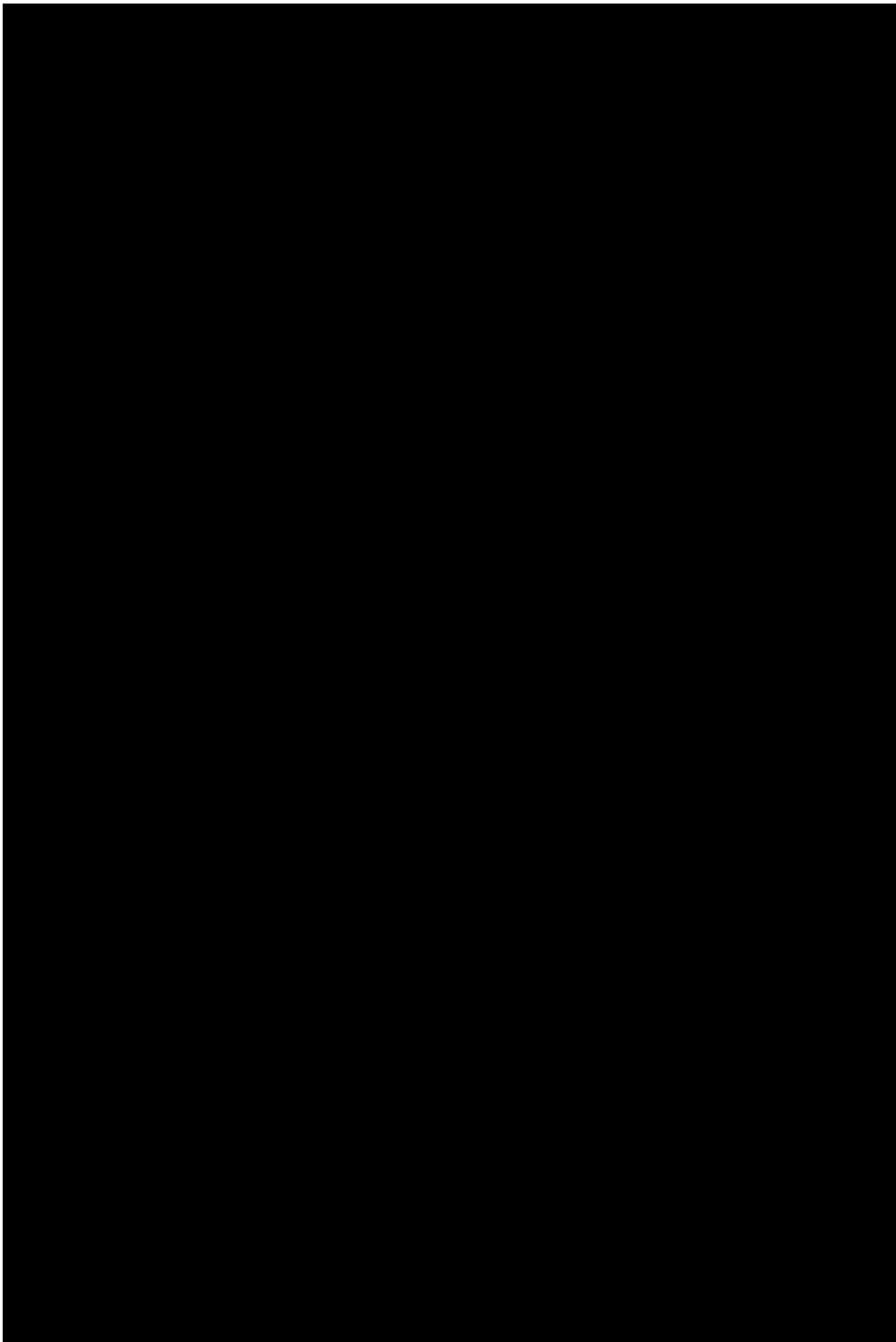
But behind the ticking,
behind the sound, I can
hear the other: clean
and sterile and cold.

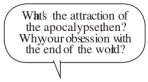


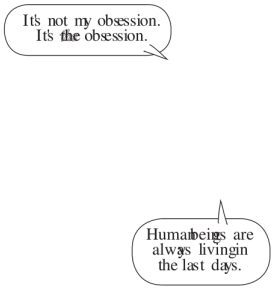

You know you can se




You know you can se




What's the attraction of the apocalypse then? Why your obsession with the end of the world?


It's not my obsession.
It's the obsession.
Human beings are always living in the last days.

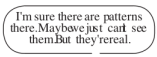
What have we got?
Never more than a hundred years until the end of our world.
There's more to it than that, though.

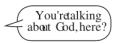
Perhaps.

I see almost no one these
days. I hurt too much, and
I am working too hard.
Some contact with the
rest of the world is inevi-
table, however.

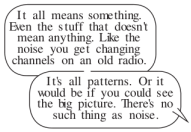
Reed lives in the flat above me.
Earlier this evening he came
down for a coffee. We carefully
avoided the subject of my illness.

In retrospect, it occurs to me
that my illness might have been
all we were talking about.

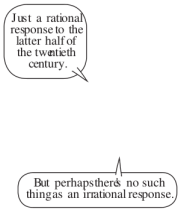

I'm sure there are patterns
there.Maybewe just can't see
them.But they'rereal.


You'rtalking
abat God,here?

No. Just patterns.
I'm saying that it doesn't matter what you read, what you hear, what the input is. So all this stuff you're fascinated by, the world ending, the times it hasn't..

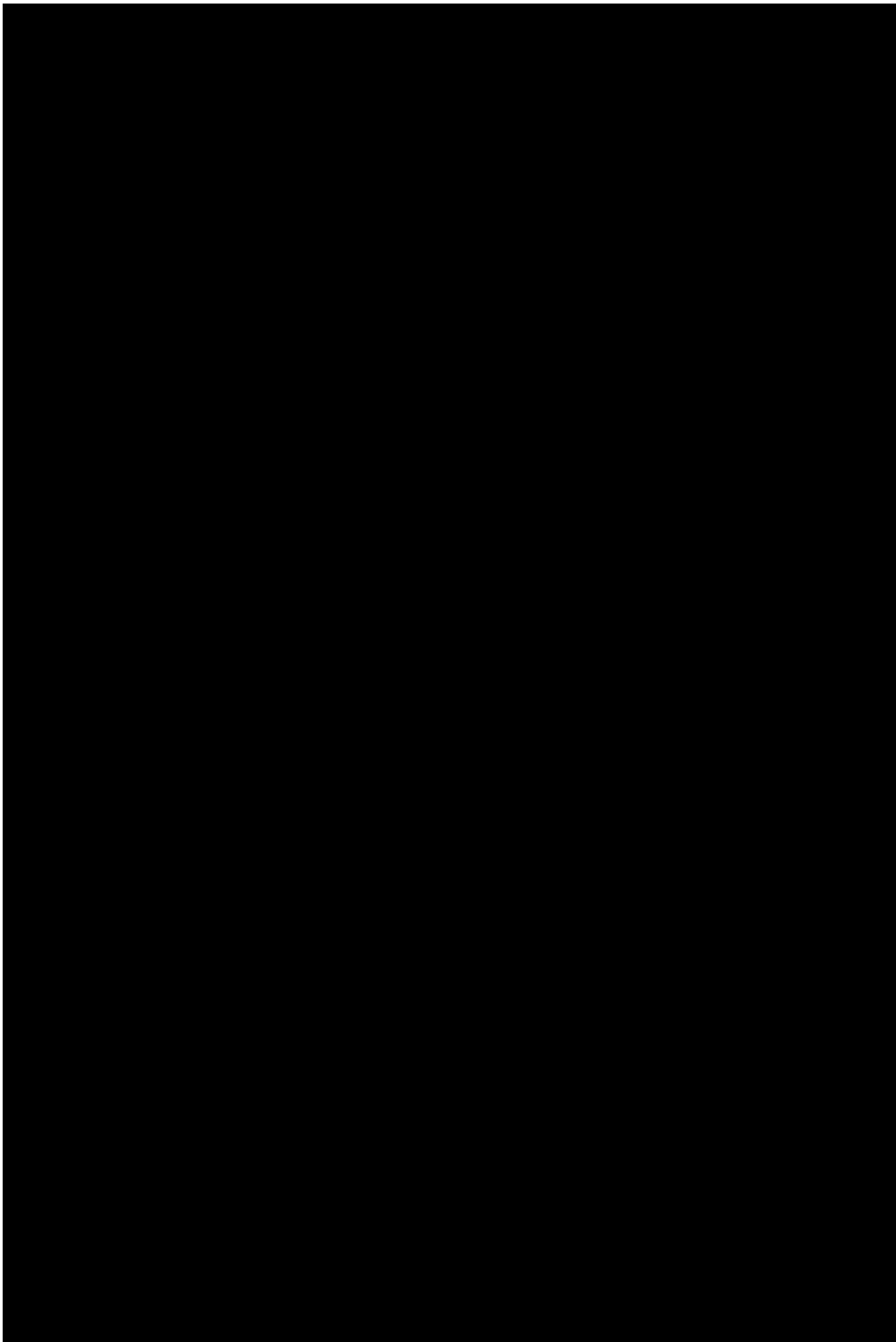

It all means something. Even the stuff that doesn't mean anything. Like the noise you get changing channels on an old radio.
It's all patterns. Or it would be if you could see the big picture. There's no such thing as noise.

You're a
mystic, Reed.


Just a rational response to the latter half of the twentieth century.
But perhaps there's no such thing as an irrational response.

He left shortly after, and I sat in the dark, and thought: There's no big apocalypse. Just an endless procession of little ones.

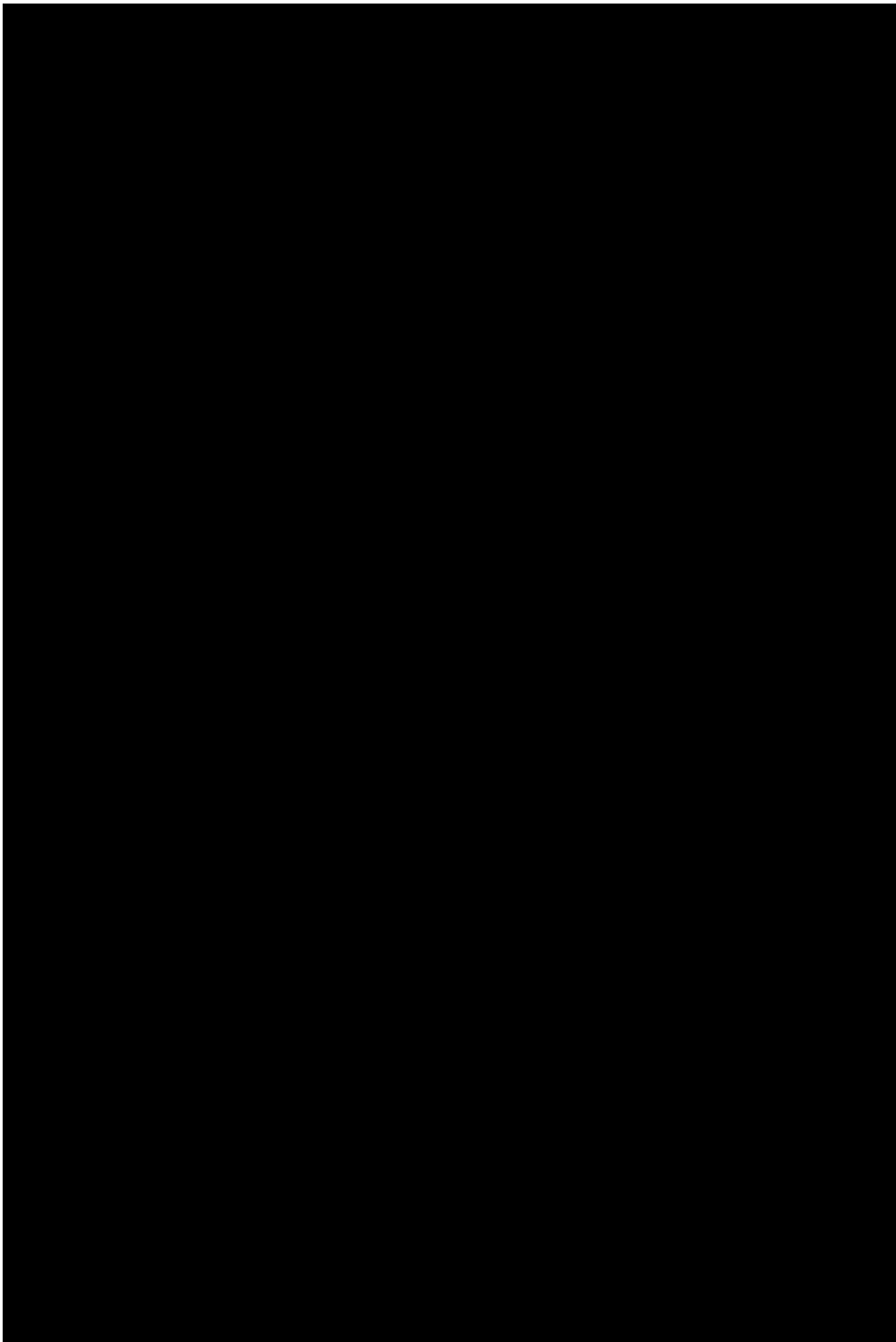
Somewhere, the horsemen are riding. War and famine, illness and death.



ILLNESS

Revelation Chapter 6 Vs. 2

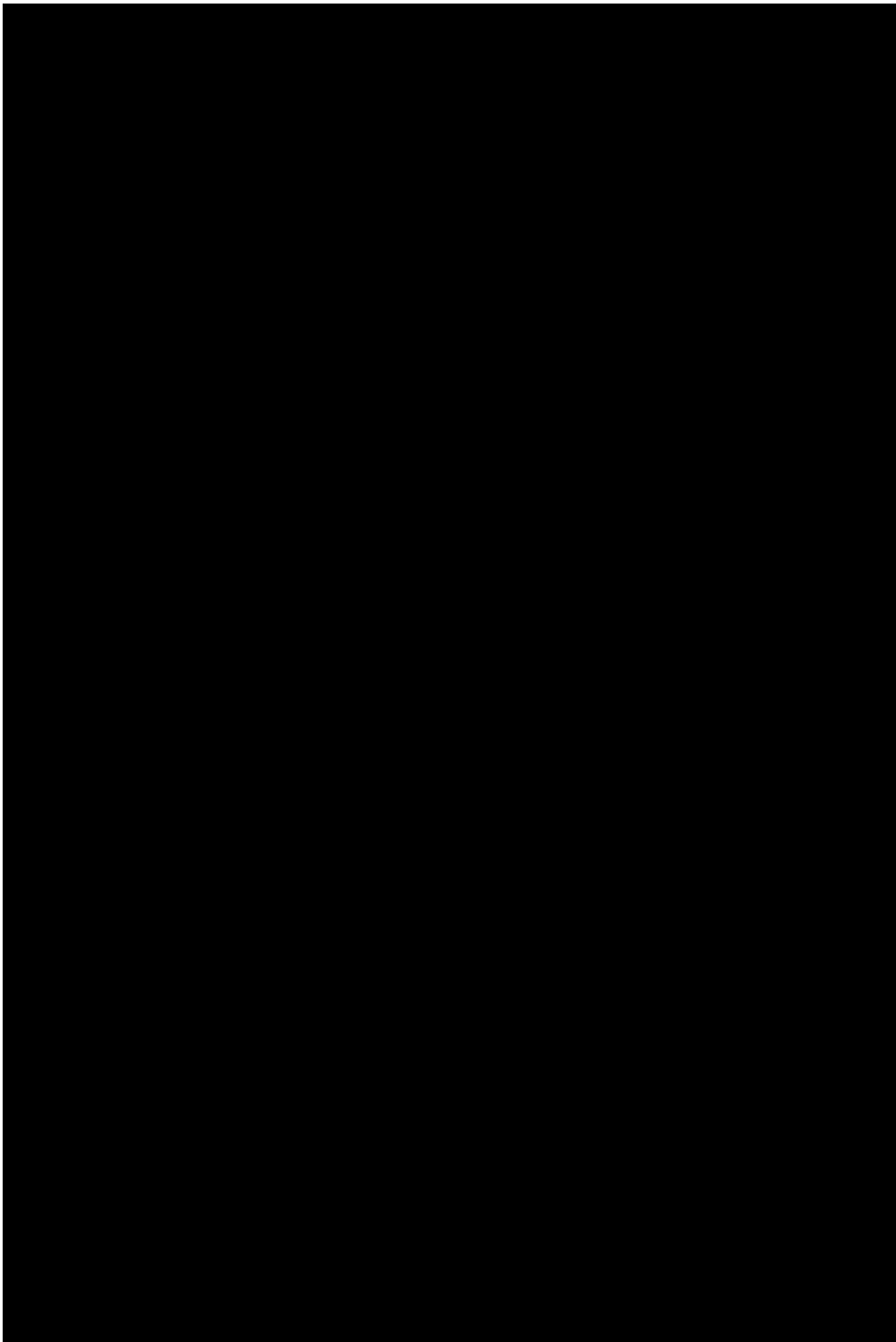
And I saw, and behold a white horse;
and he that sat on him had a bow;
and a crown was given unto him;
and he went forth conquering,
and to conquer.



WAR

Vs. 4

And there went out
another horse that
was red;
and the power was
given to him that sat
thereon to take peace
from the earth, and
that they should kill
one another; and there
was given unto him a
great sword.



FAMINE

Vs. 5 and 6

And I beheld and lo a black horse; and be that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

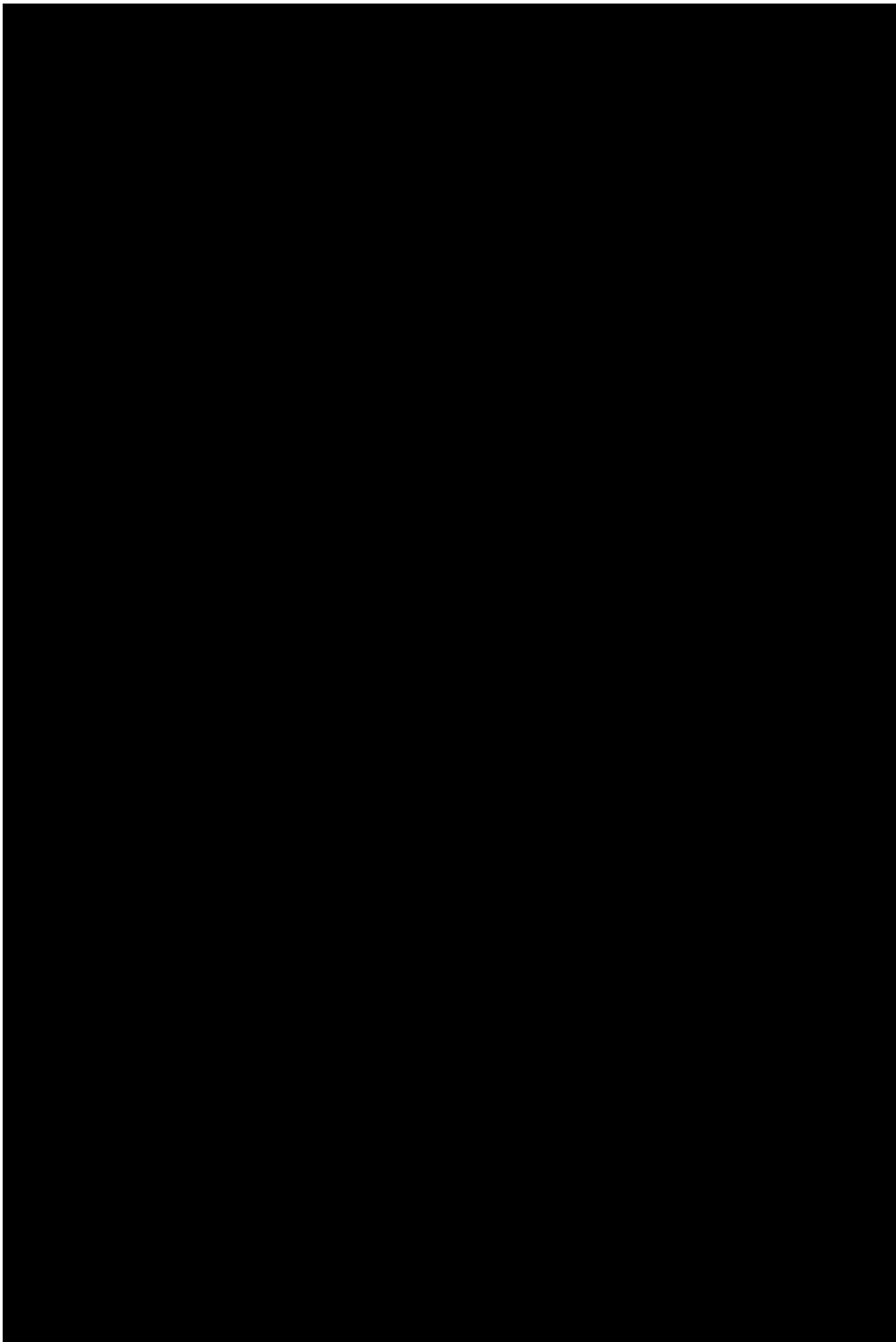
And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the

wine.

the rich and the powerful do not need an end and a righting of wrongs - and in certain undercurrents of tradition it was transmitted from century to century.

Eschatology is often the result of outside pressure. people need an enemy. they view the coming utopia as coming to correct social injustices.

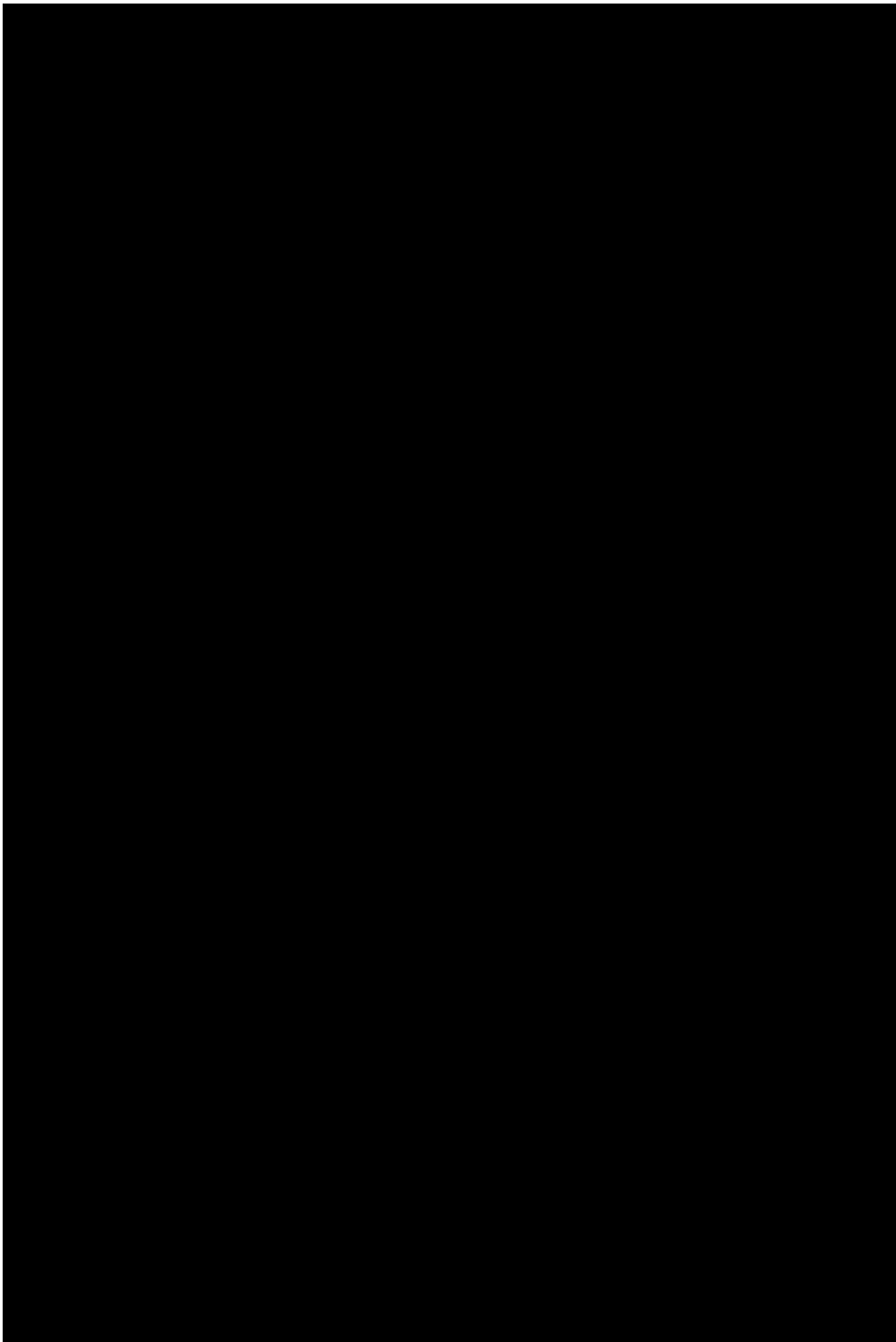
ArmageDdon gives us a view of salvation as:
a. collective
b. imminent
c. miraculous



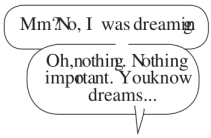
DEATH

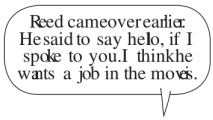
Vs. 8

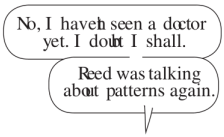
I looked, and I beheld a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.



Hello,
Inanna.

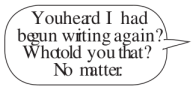

Mm? No, I was dreaming
Oh, nothing. Nothing important. You know dreams...

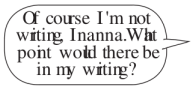

Reed cameoverearlier.
Hesaidto say hello, if I
spoke to you.I thinkhe
wants a job in the moves.

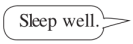

No, I haven't seen a doctor yet. I doubt I shall.
Reed was talking about patterns again.

Inanna is Reed's opposite.
I heard them arguing, once,
at a party, when I went to
parties.

She told him that there was
no ultimate meaning to
anything.
All there ever was, was the
illusion of order in the chaos.


You heard I had
begun writing again?
Who told you that?
No matter.

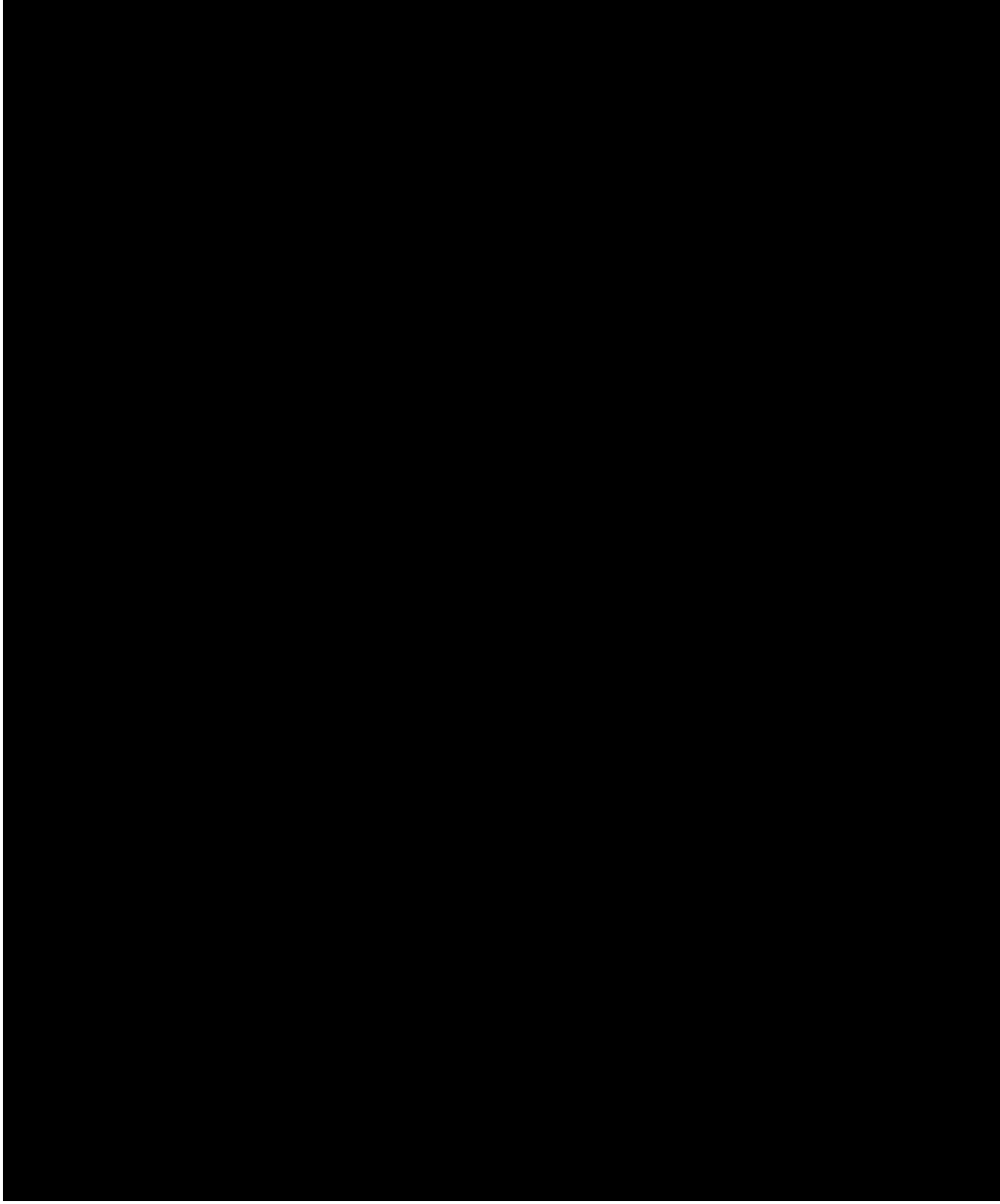

Of course I'm not writing, Inanna. What point would there be in my writing?

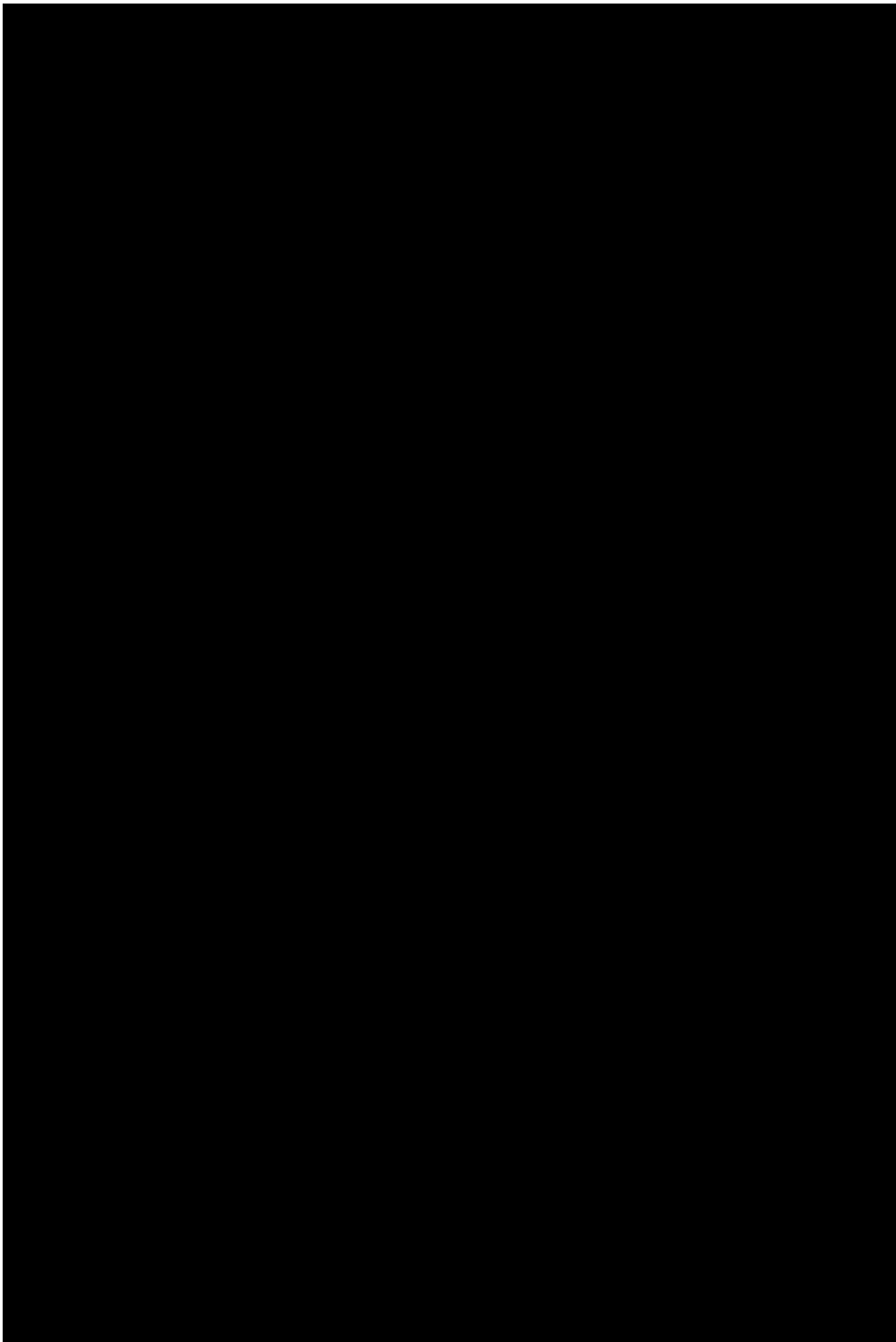

Sleep well.

I put down the telephone.

I pick up my pen.

And I commence to write.





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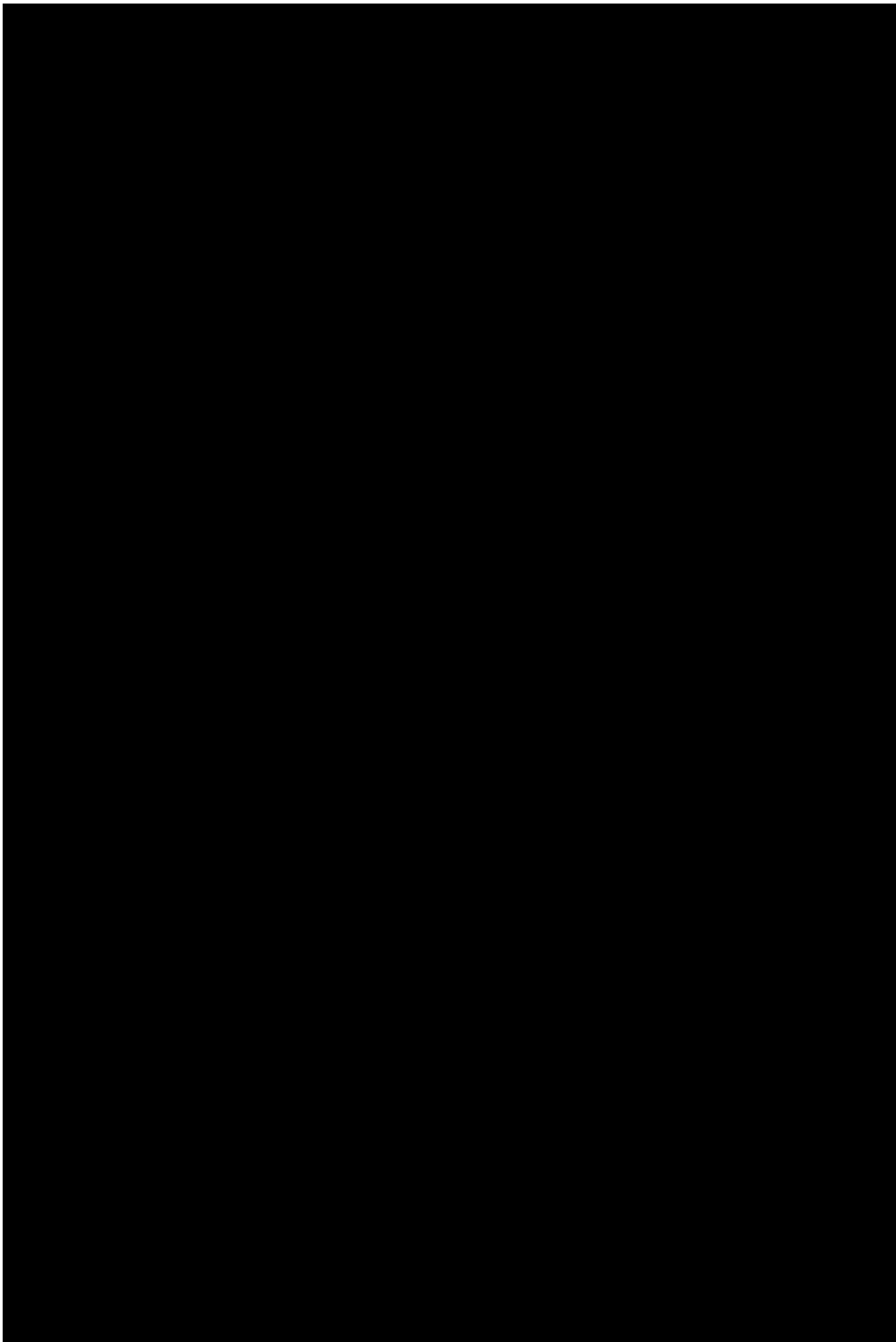
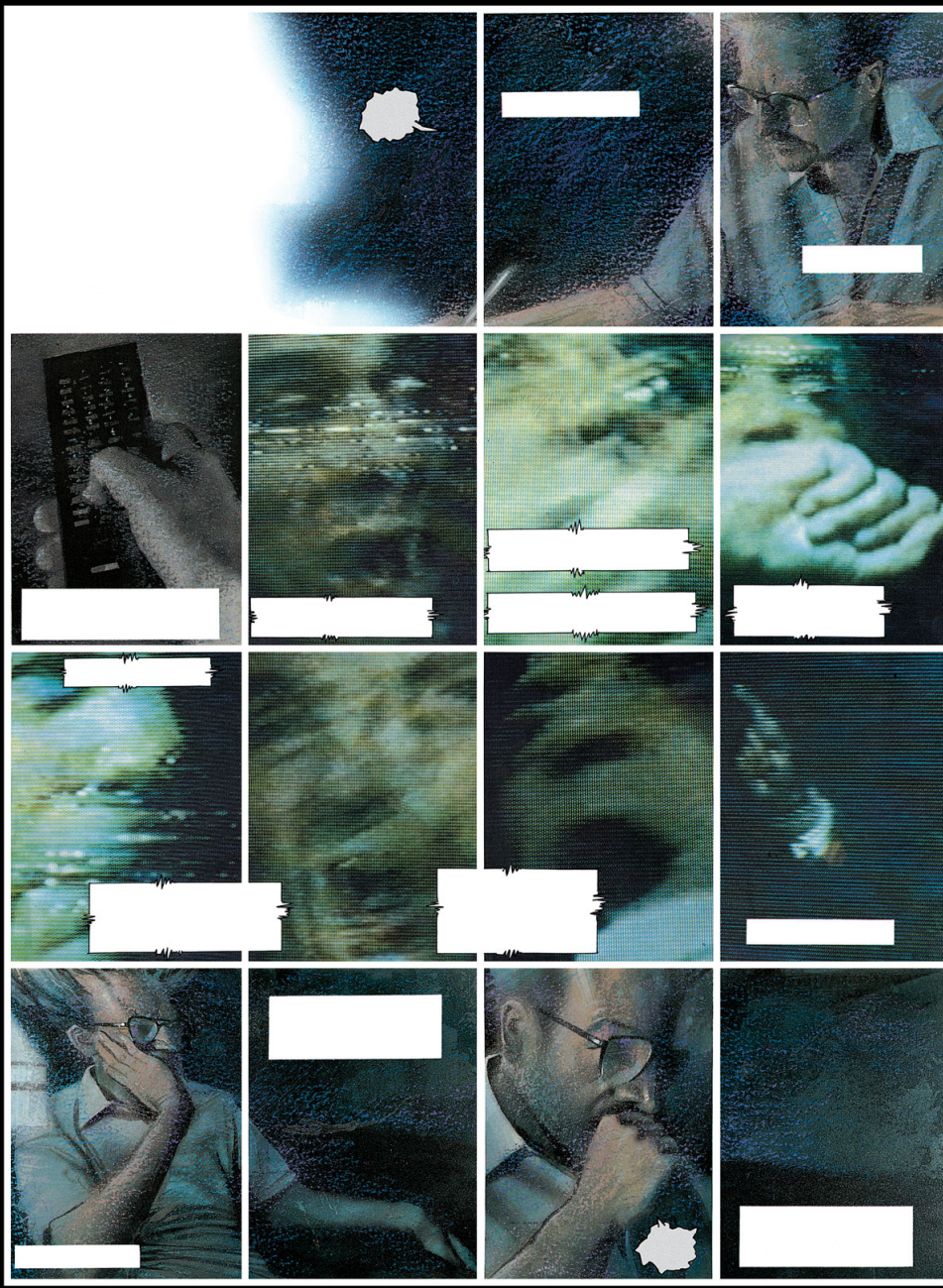




Cough.

Things are changing.

I'm feeling better.

Concentration comes and goes.
When it comes I work. When
it goes, I turn on the television.

All there, in the Revelation of
St. John the Divine, on Patmos.

He spoke of the flaming star called Wormwood that poisoned the waters.

What does Chernobyl mean in English? That's right. Wormwood.

It's one of the symbols. Signs and portents. We're living in the last days.

I mean, take credit cards.

Revelation, chapter 13 verse 17, that no man might buy or sell, save he had the mark, of the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

It's hard to believe, isn't it? A man, two thousand years ago, predicting credit cards. But he wasn't a mere man. He was inspired by the word of the Lord.

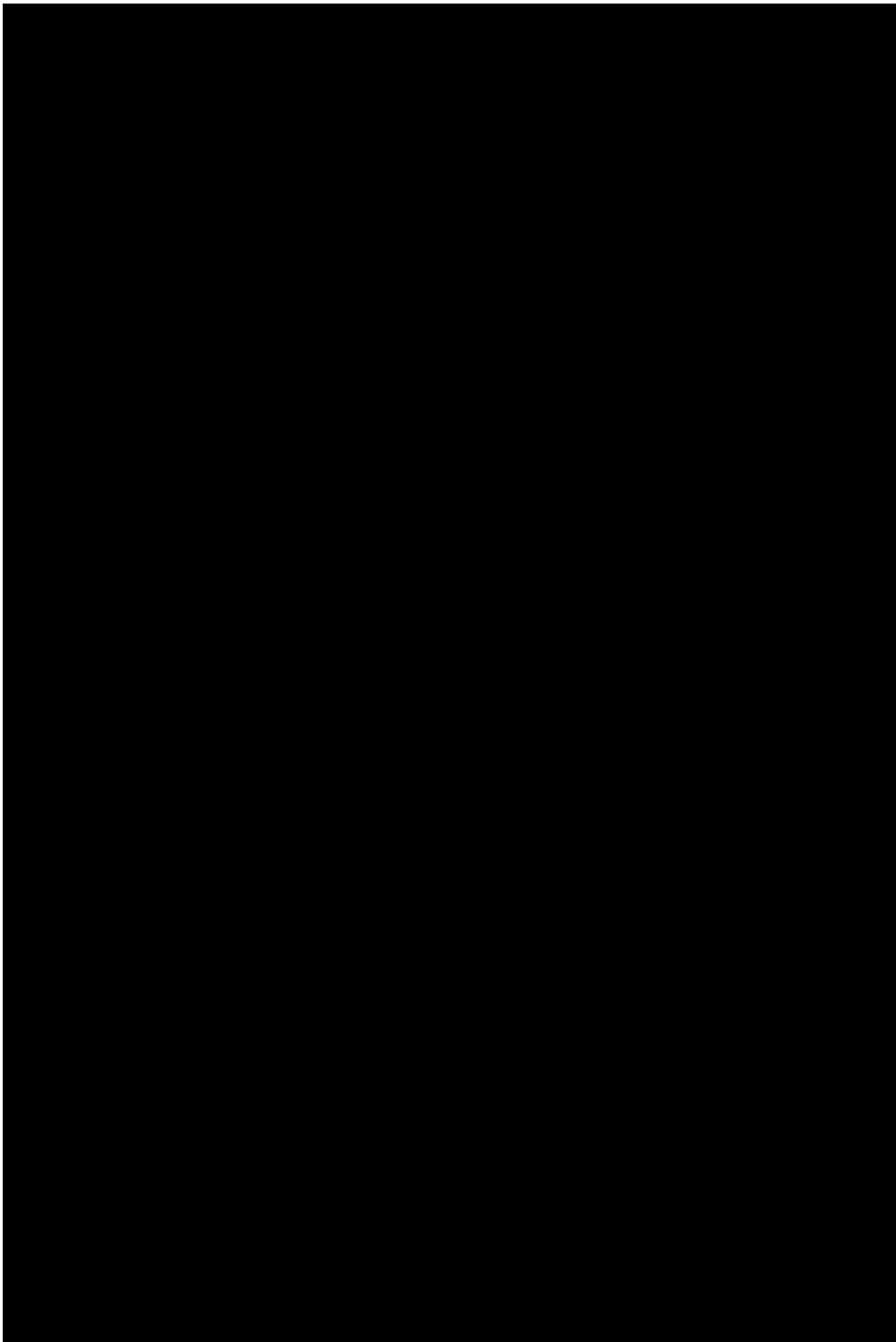
Do people believe this?

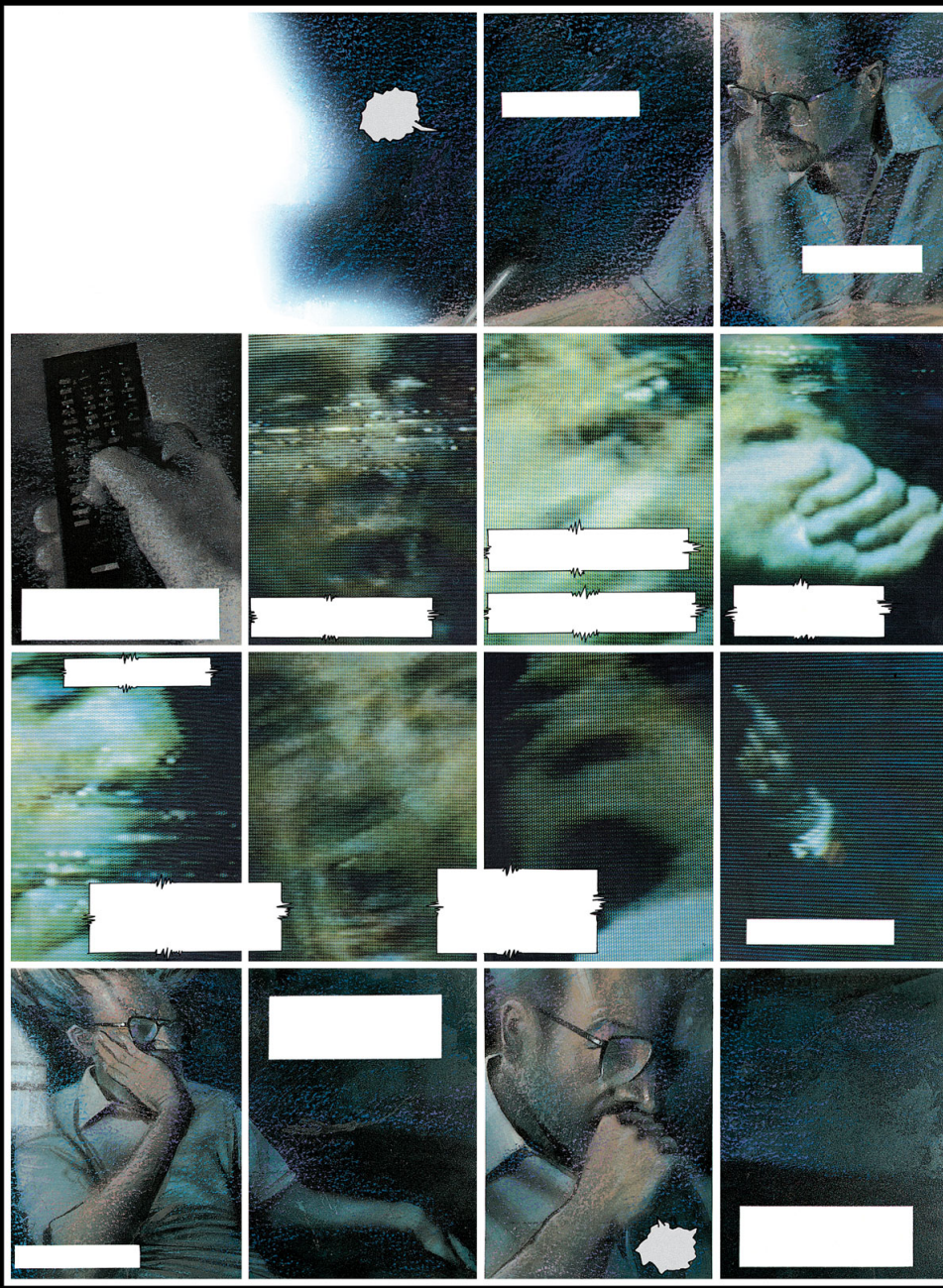
Of course they do.

Apocalypses are always
just around the corner.
Words mean whatever you
want them to mean.

Cough.

The Film is nearing its end. I have written more than half of it, and it gets easier as it goes.





But don't be afraid.

Before the nuclear bombs rain from the skies, before the waters are poisoned and the rivers turn to blood, and the seas become fire and glass.

Before the plagues. Before the radiation sickness. Before the unrighteous and whoremongers and the makers and lovers of lies perish in agony and despair…

Before that happens, every man and woman and child has truly accepted Jesus into their hearts, they will be translated.
They will experience the Rapture.

They will be the one generation that the Holy Bible tells us of who will never experience death. They will be taken away, swept up into the air in incorruptible bodies, just like Our Lord had when he rose from the tomb, never to die. Caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air…

You will never die, if you believe.

Translation?

I don't know how it translates.

Some people floating lonely:

…others rescued by little
lemur aliens with huge
copper eyes, and saved
from the Apocalypse.

Everyone goes to the moon.

Only, I don't believe
in Apacalypses.

I believe in Apocatastases.

I think it may be the title for the
Film. It's a bitch to pronounce, and
no one knows what it means, but
otherwise it's a great title.

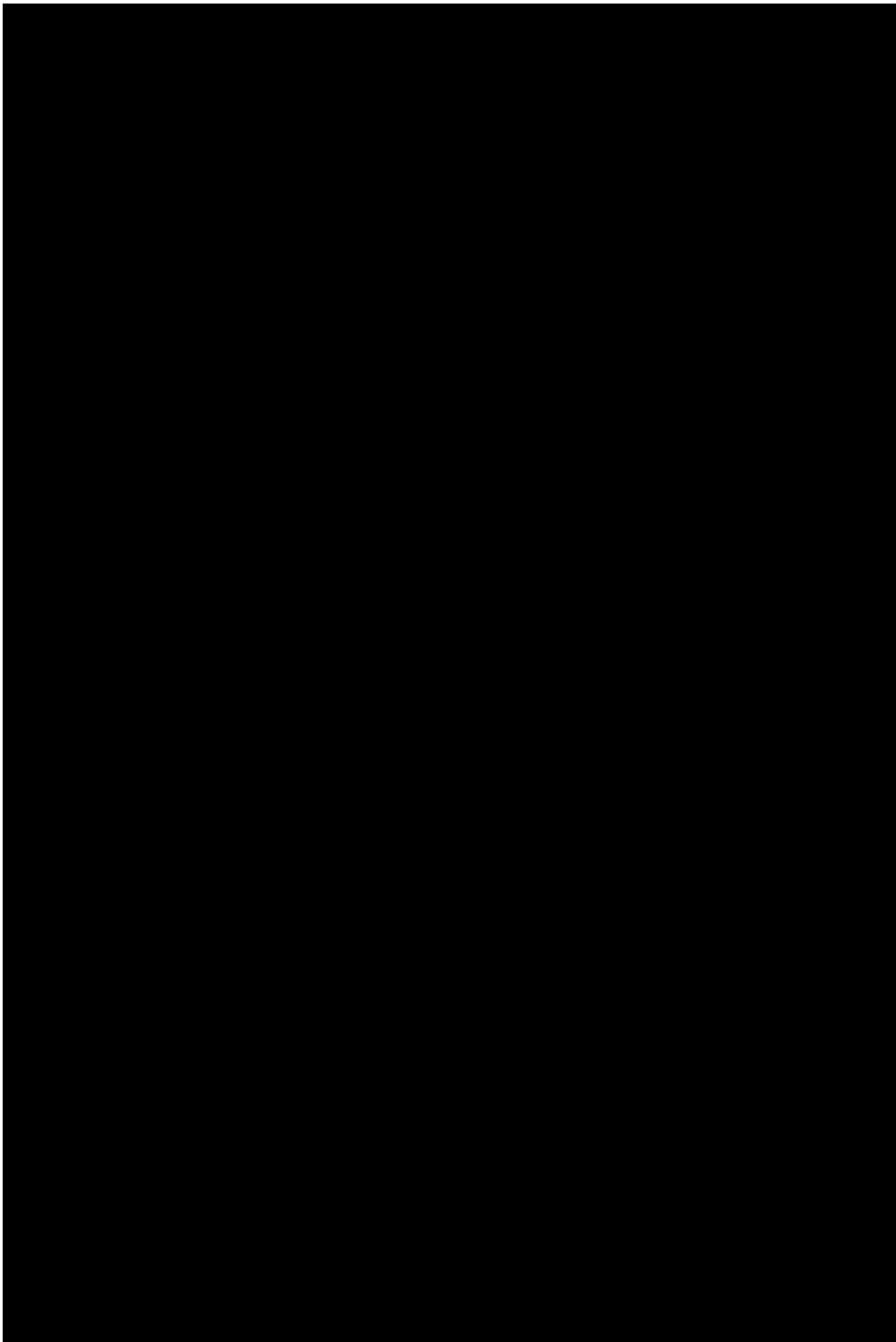
Apo-cata-stasis.

What it means:

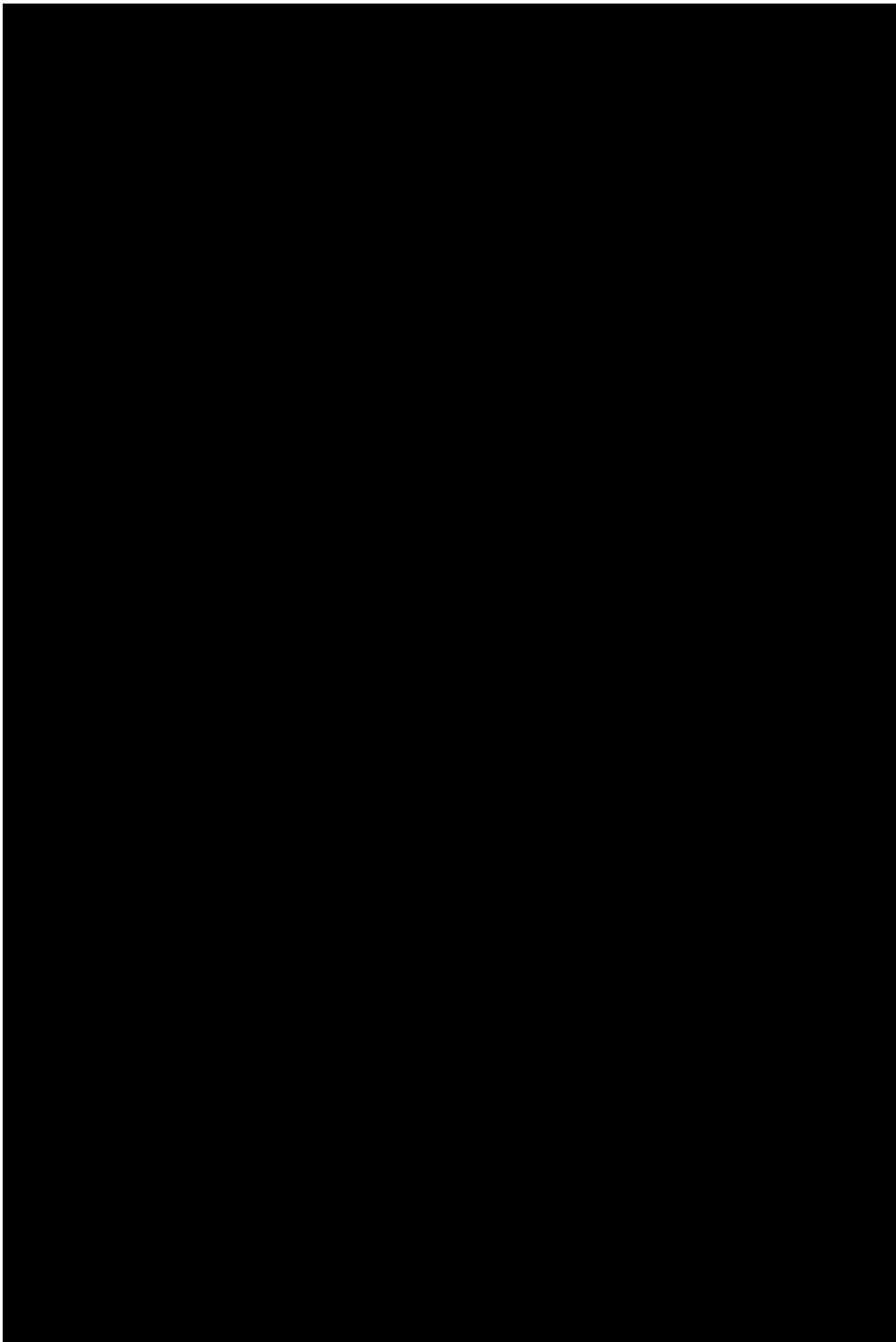
1) Restoration, re-establishment, renovation.
2) Return to a previous condition.
3) (Astronomy) Return to the same apparent

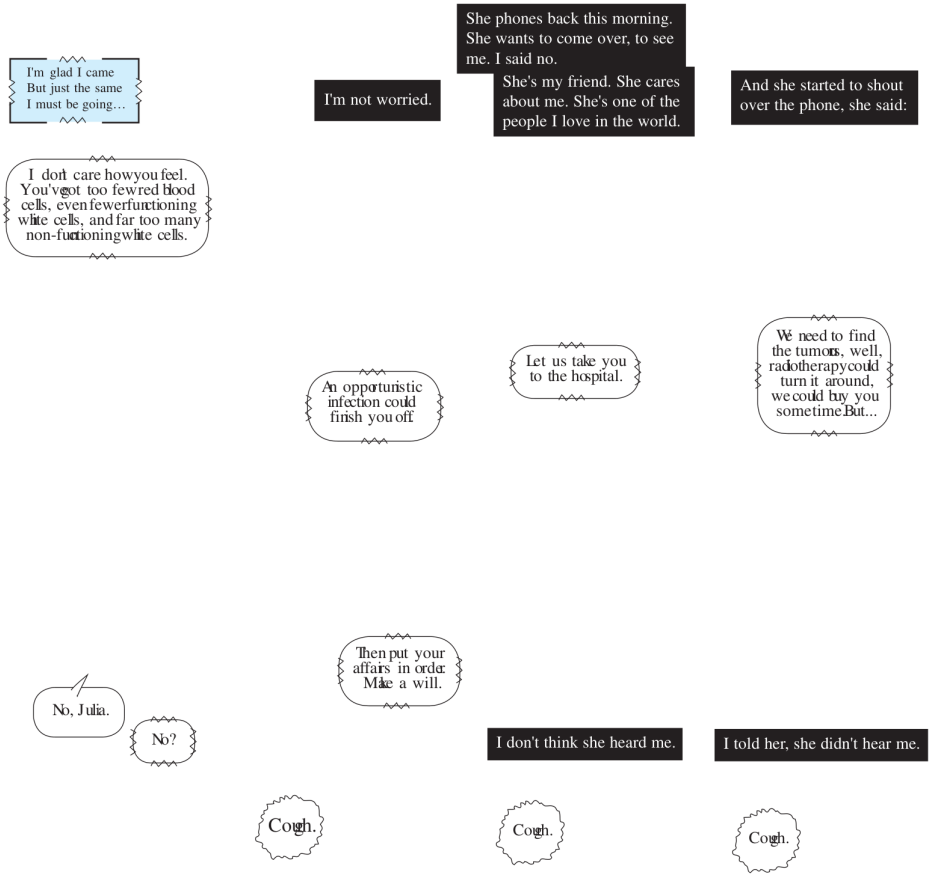
position, completion of a period of revolution.

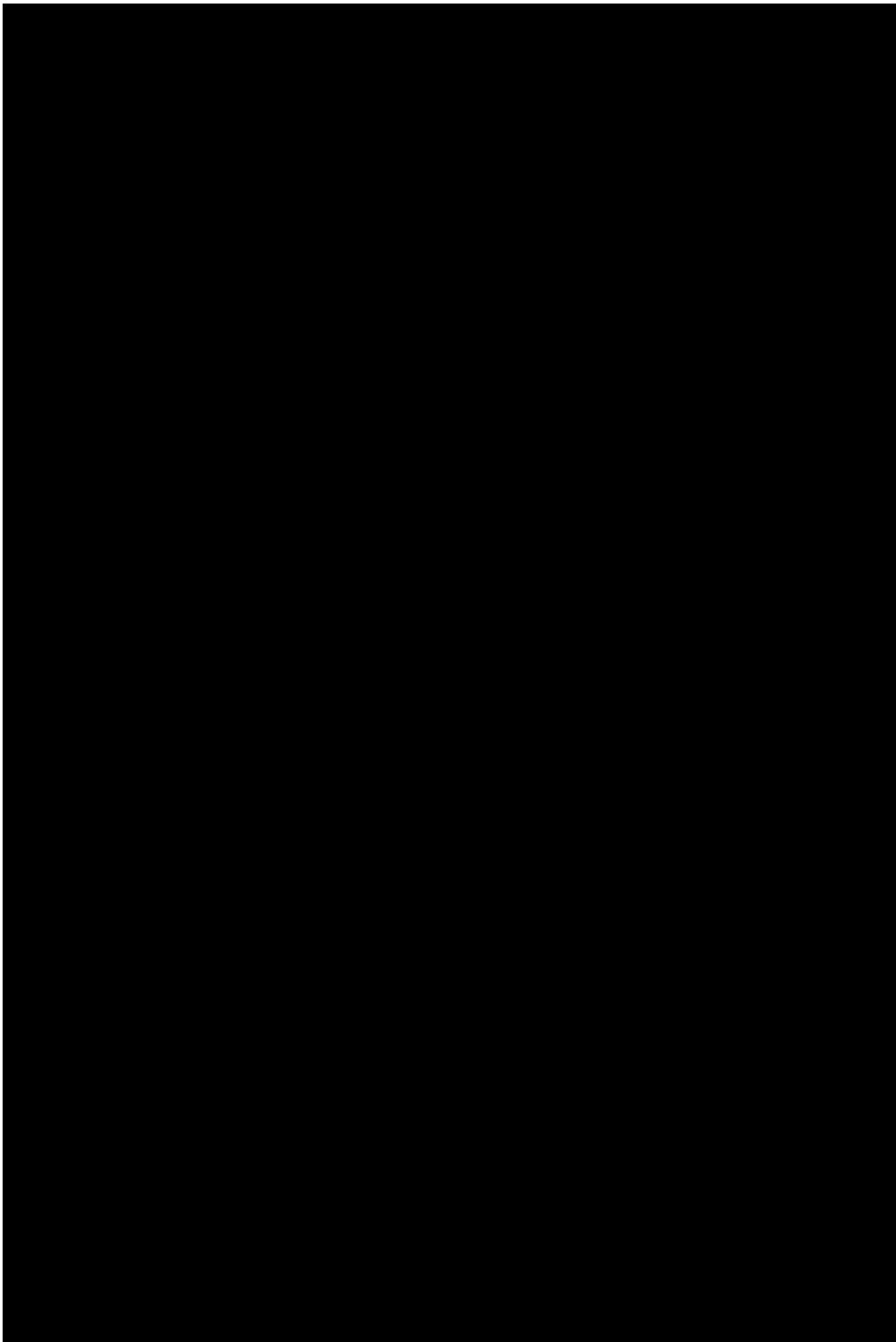
Think about it.



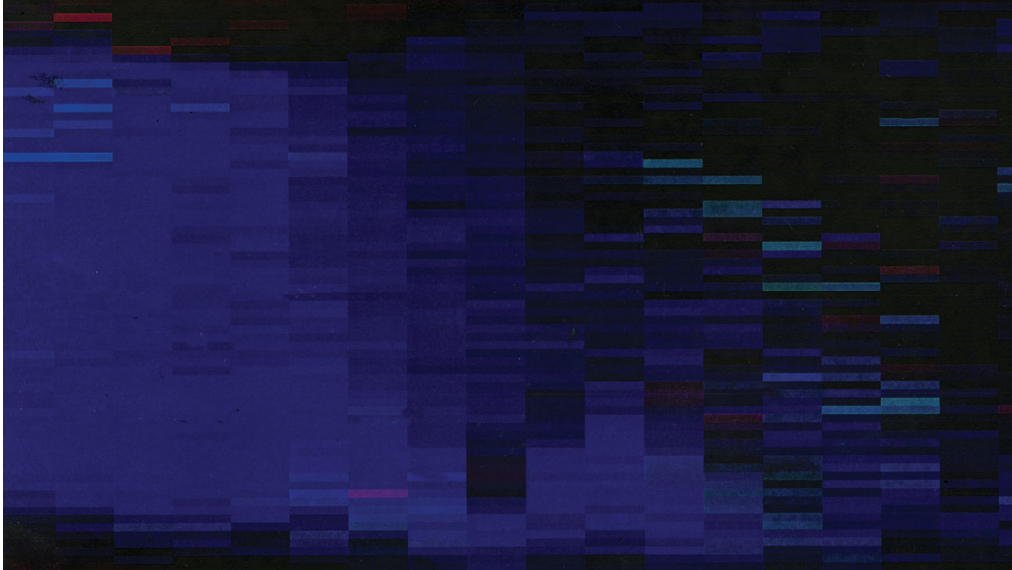
Cough.
Julia? It's me.
I think I'm getting better.
I phoned my doctor, a few days ago.
Snow leopard face in the back of my mind.
Yeah I'm thinner.
Cough.
But I'm better.
Better.
Hullo. You didn't answer my calls. How are you feeling?
Good. Good. I'm pleased. That's good.
So, you still want to cut me open? Do your biopsies and your CAT scans?
No. Don't worry. But...would you let us do a blood test?
I said yes.
Enough.
...born again? Will you accept him into your hearts?
Hello. I must be going.
I cannot stay I came to say I must be going.




I'm glad I came
But just the same
I must be going…
I don't care how you feel.
You've got too few red blood cells, even fewer functioning white cells, and far too many non-functioning white cells.
I'm not worried.
She phones back this morning. She wants to come over, to see me. I said no.
She's my friend. She cares about me. She's one of the people I love in the world.
And she started to shout over the phone, she said:
An opportunistic infection could finish you off.
Let us take you to the hospital.
We need to find the tumors, well, radiotherapy could turn it around, we could buy you sometime. But...
No, Julia.
No?
Then put your affairs in order. Make a will.
I don't think she heard me.
I told her, she didn't hear me.
Cough.
Cough.
Cough.



I don't **blame** them. Intellectually I imagine something big.

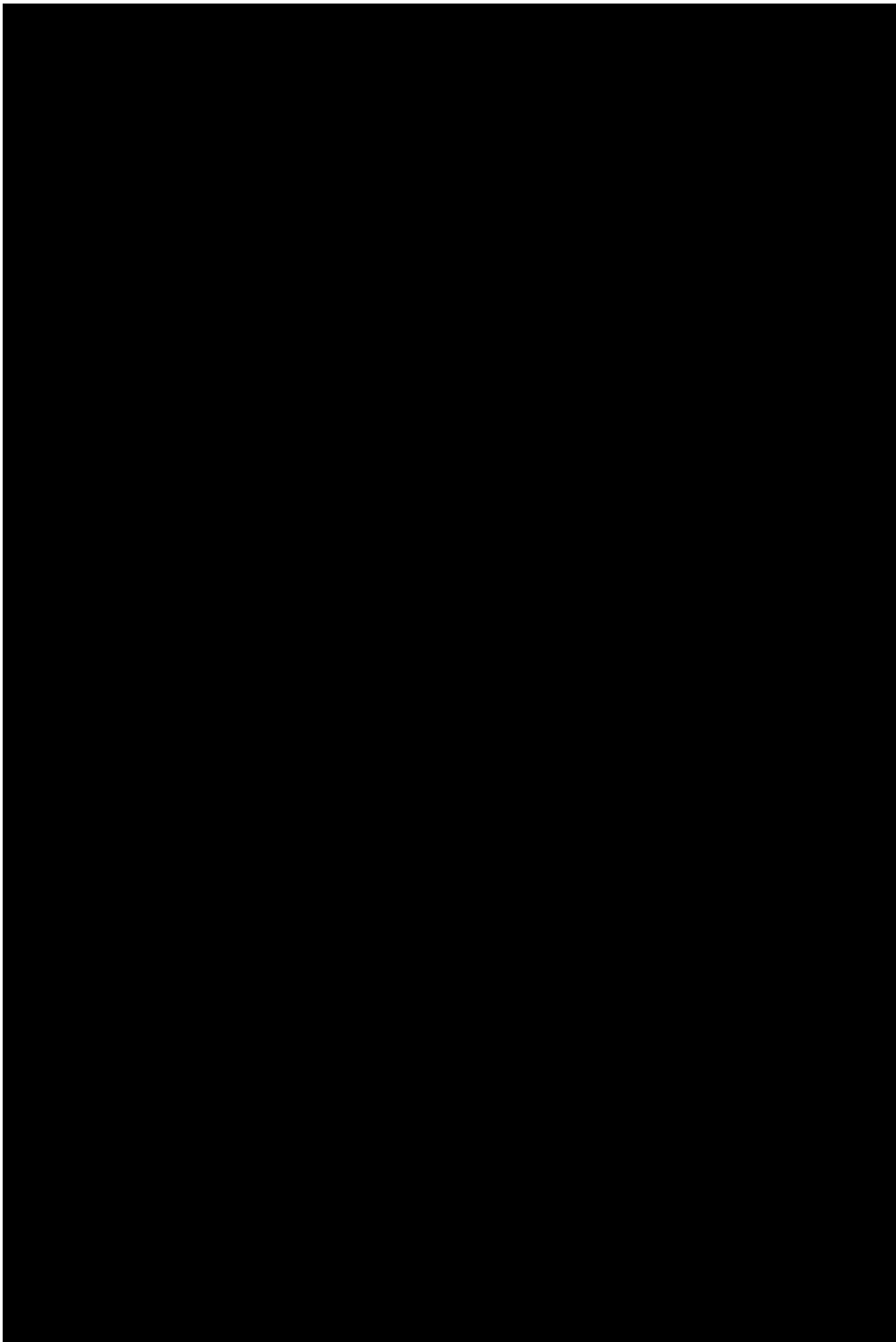


We are you to Hollywood? What's noise disrupting a cargo cult view of the place unspecified; a sandstorm.

Signal to flinch at what do a better - "I went home".

Dir: It was like **people need to read the inside of noise.**

Like? I can hardly.



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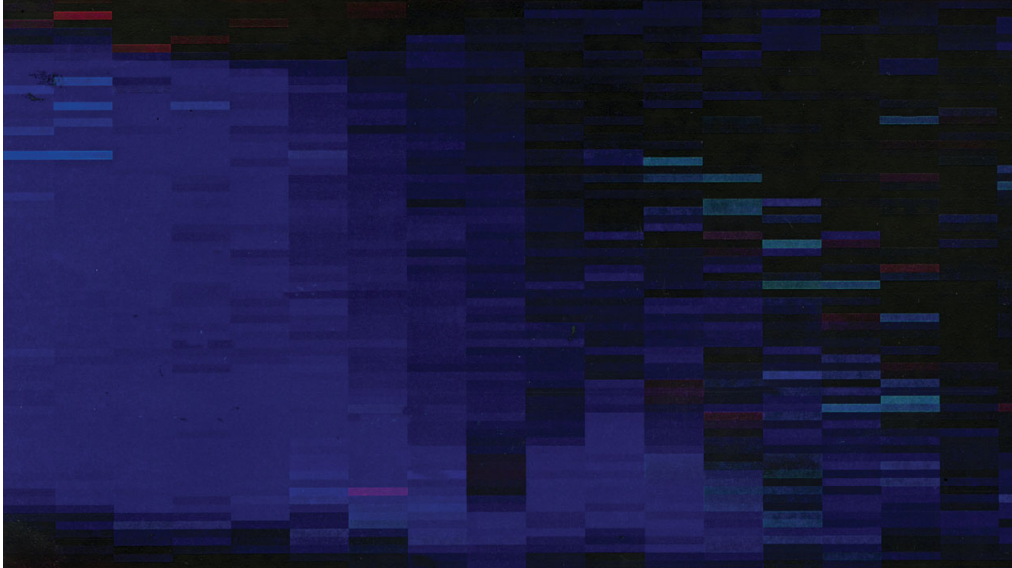

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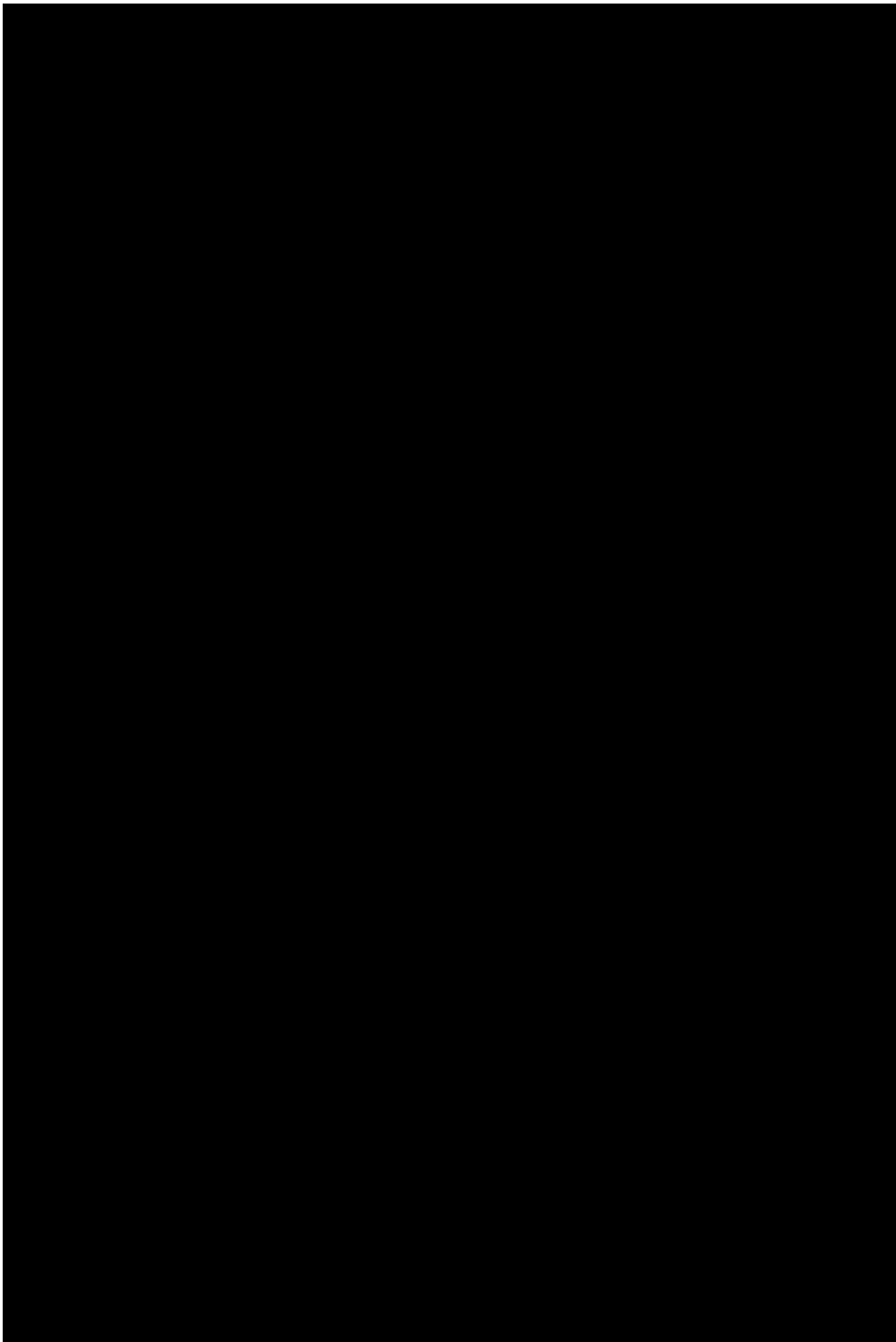
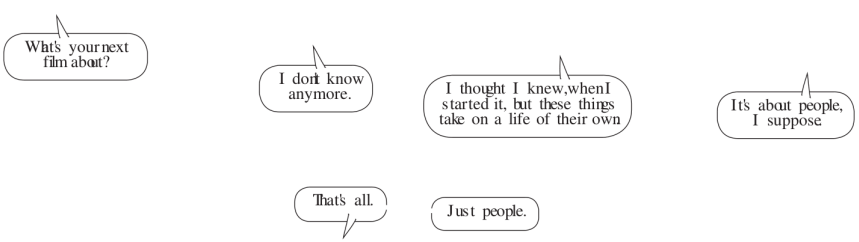
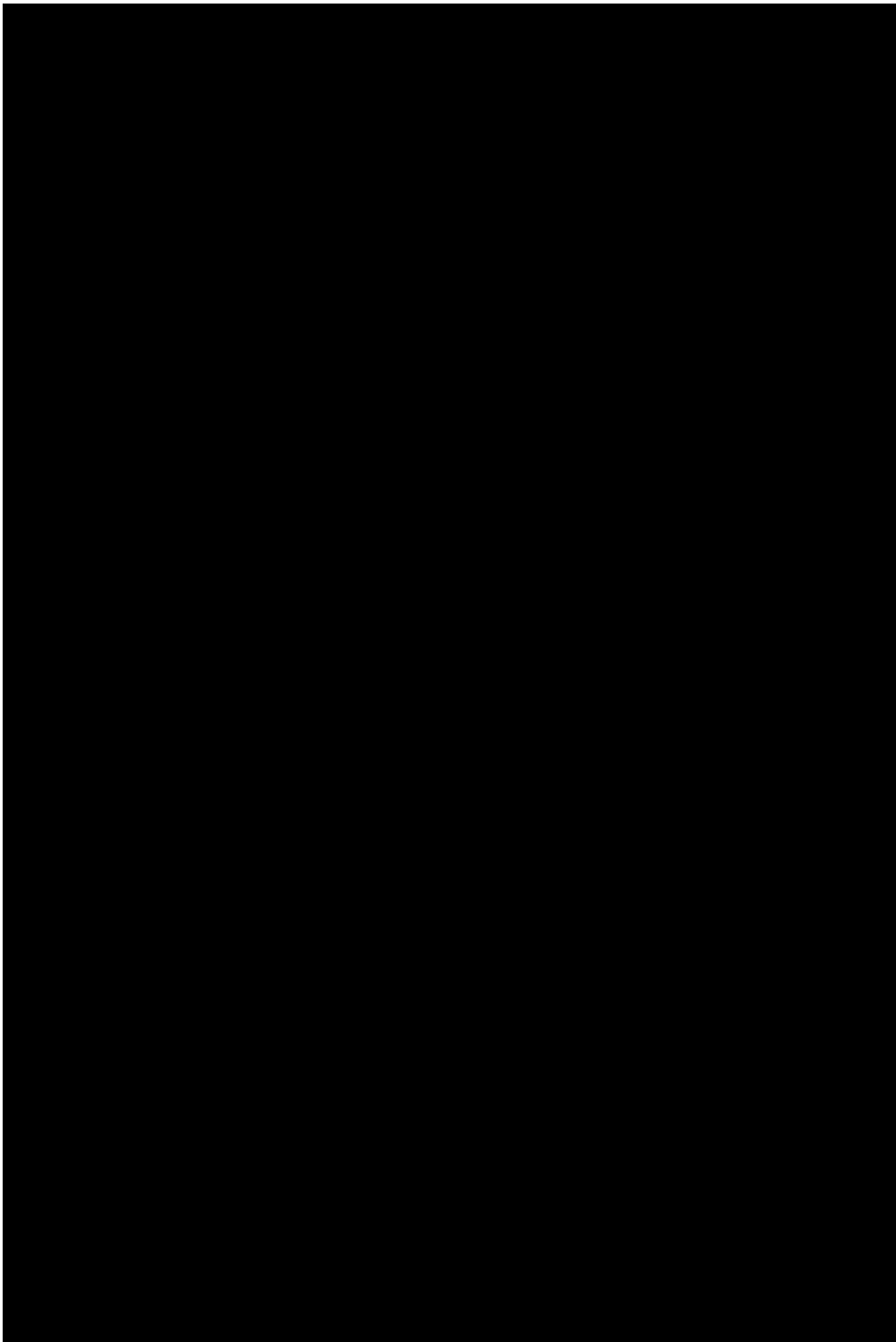


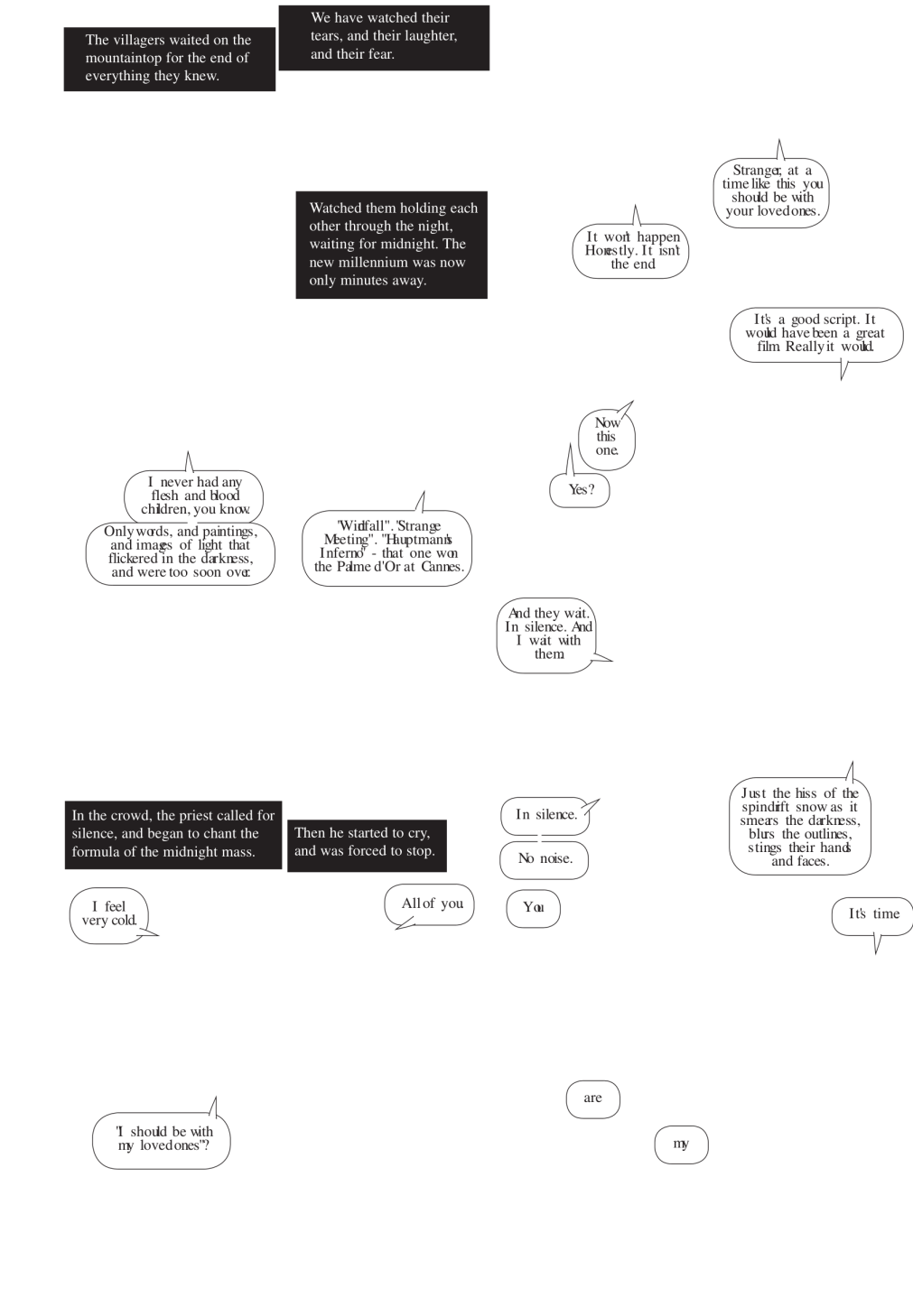
There is a sense of achievement that comes with finishing something that is unlike anything else I know.

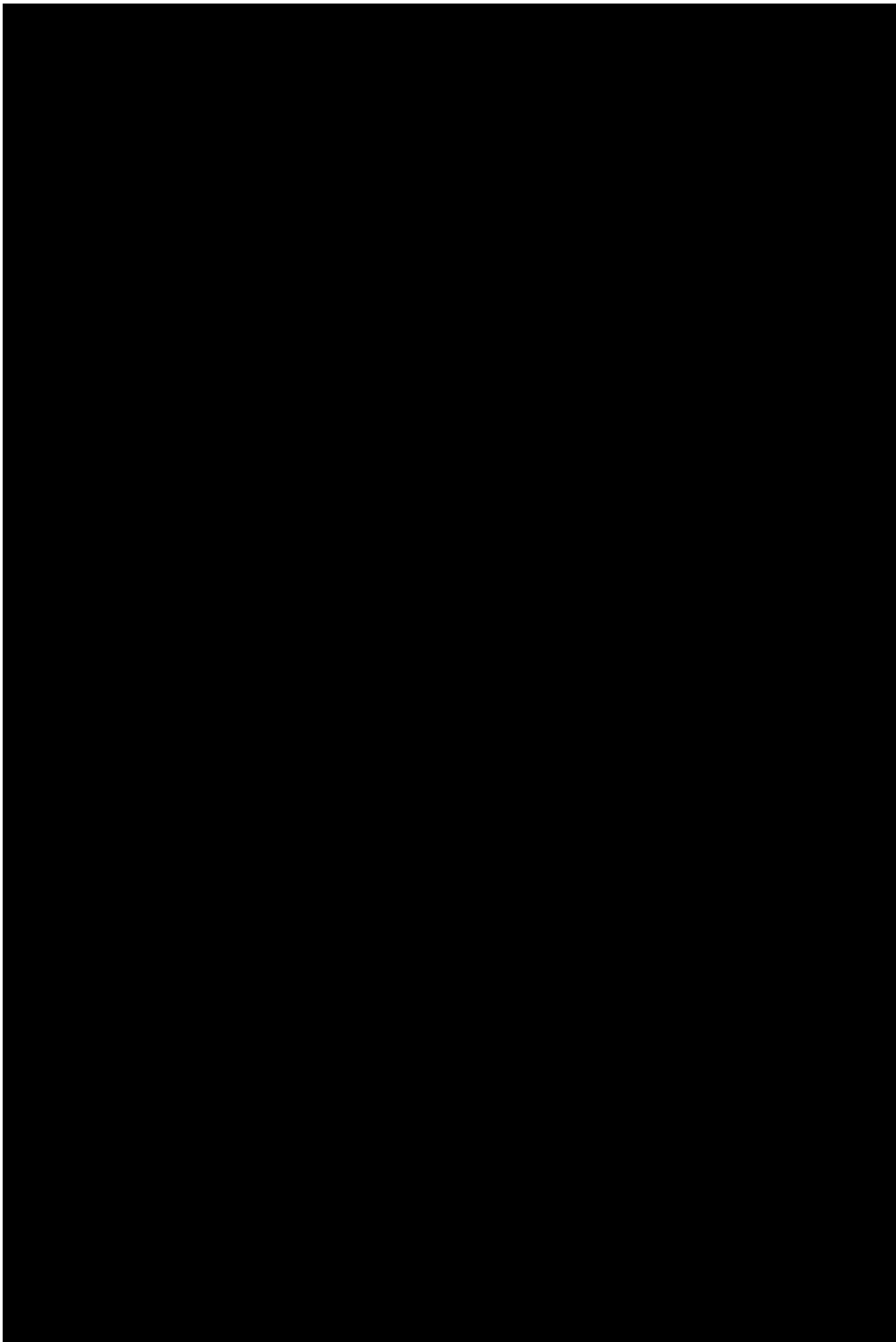
It sounds so simple,
when I put it like that.

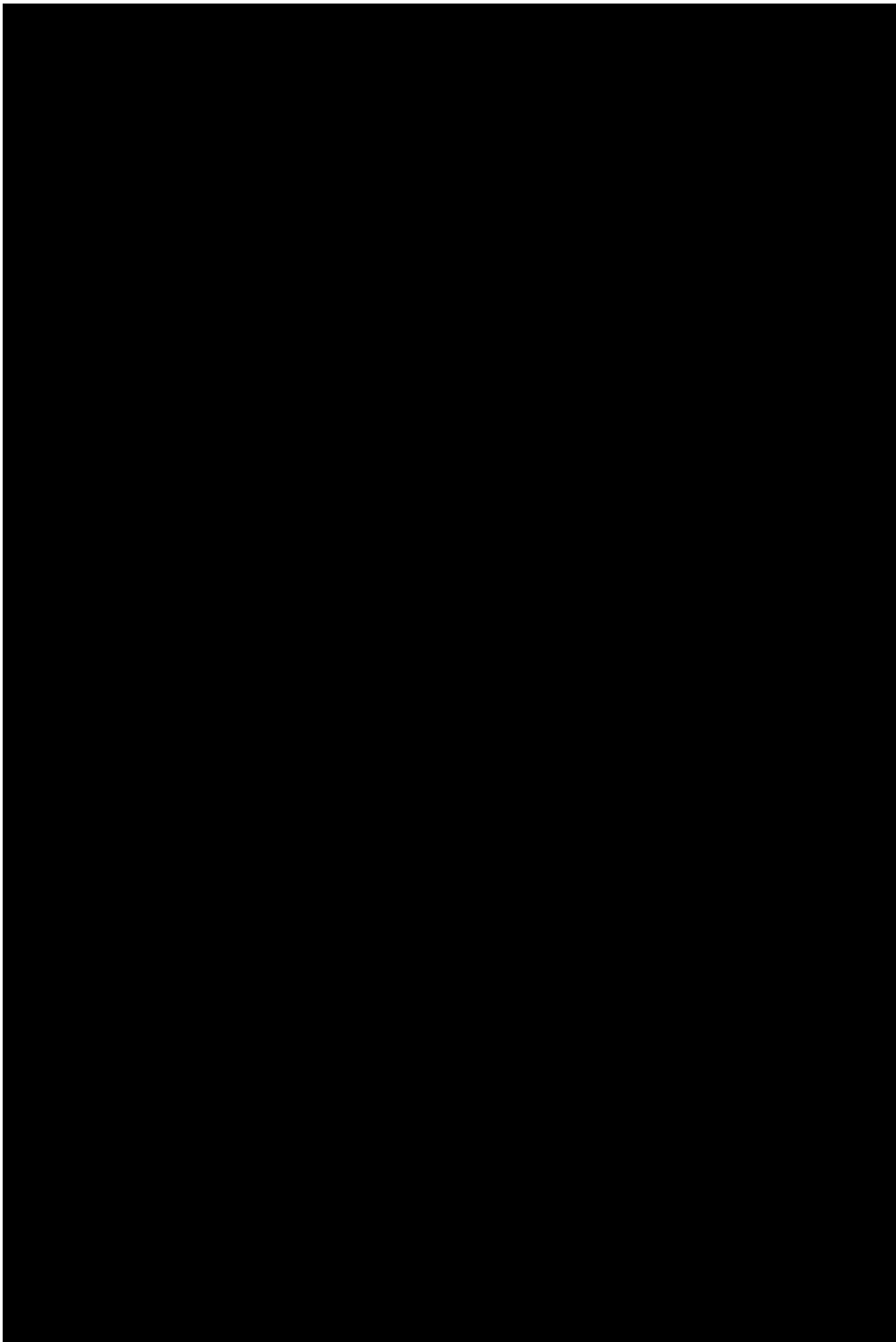
It's real, now.

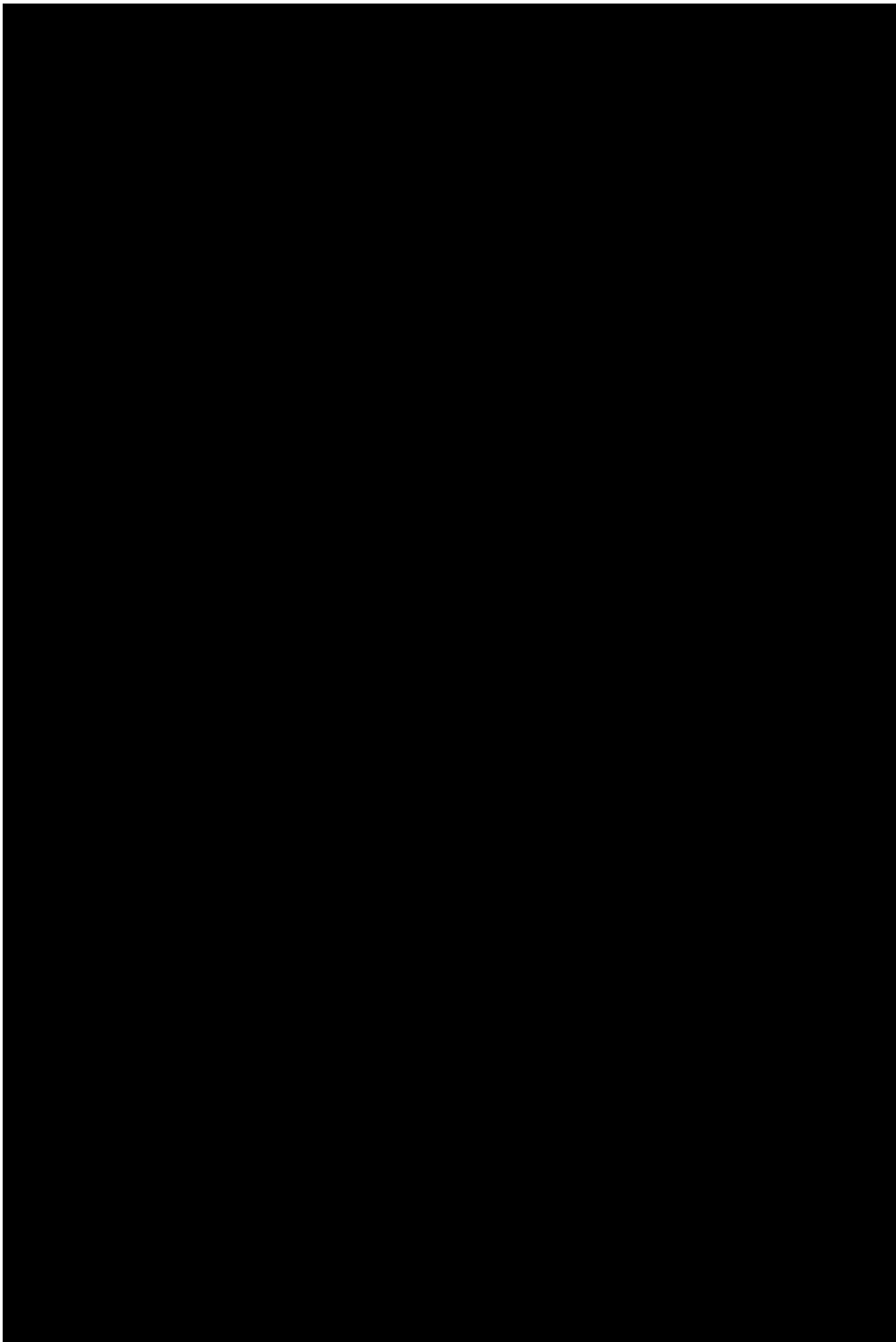

What's your next film about?
I don't know anymore.
I thought I knew, when I started it, but these things take on a life of their own
It's about people, I suppose
That's all.
Just people.

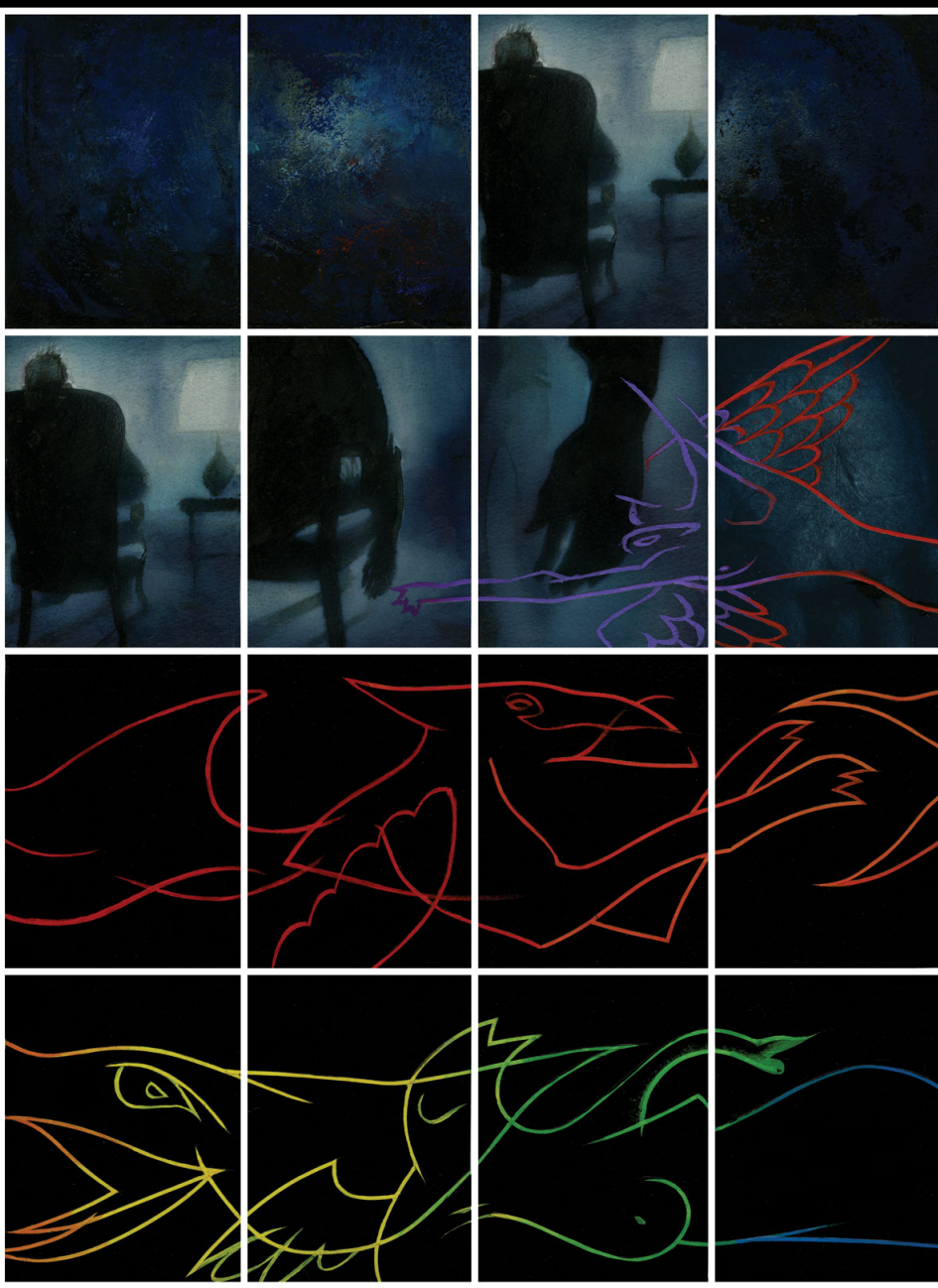


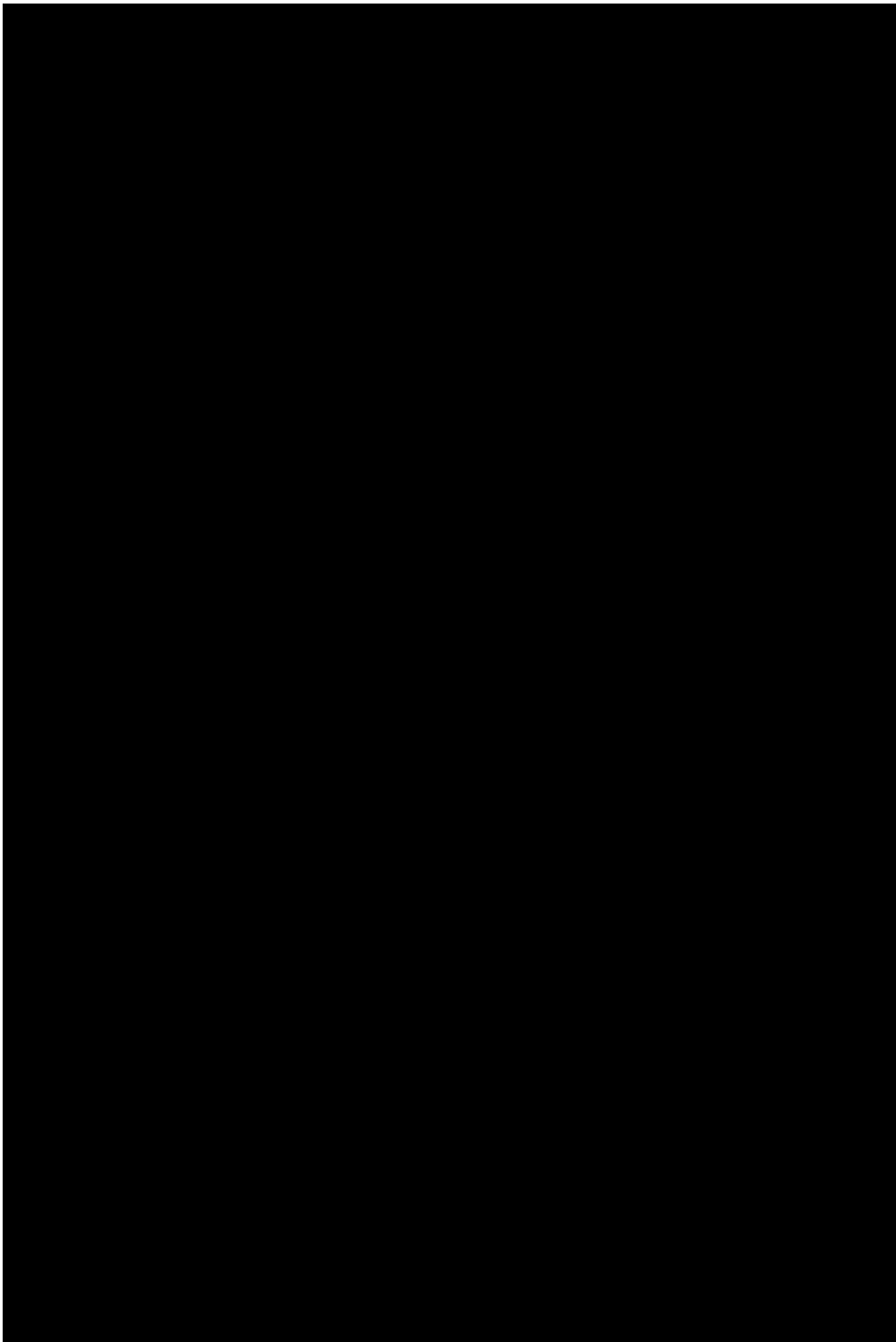

The villagers waited on the mountaintop for the end of everything they knew.
We have watched their tears, and their laughter, and their fear.
Watched them holding each other through the night, waiting for midnight. The new millennium was now only minutes away.
Stranger, at a time like this you should be with your loved ones.
It won't happen. Honestly. It isn't the end.
It's a good script. It would have been a great film. Really it would.
Now this one.
Yes?
I never had any flesh and blood children, you know.
Only words, and paintings, and images of light that flickered in the darkness, and were too soon over.
"Widfall". "Strange Meeting". "Hauptmann's Inferno" - that one won the Palme d'Or at Cannes.
And they wait. In silence. And I wait with them.
In the crowd, the priest called for silence, and began to chant the formula of the midnight mass.
Then he started to cry, and was forced to stop.
In silence.
No noise.
Just the hiss of the spindrift snow as it smears the darkness, blurs the outlines, stings their hands and faces.
I feel very cold.
All of you
You
It's time
are
"I should be with my loved ones"?
my

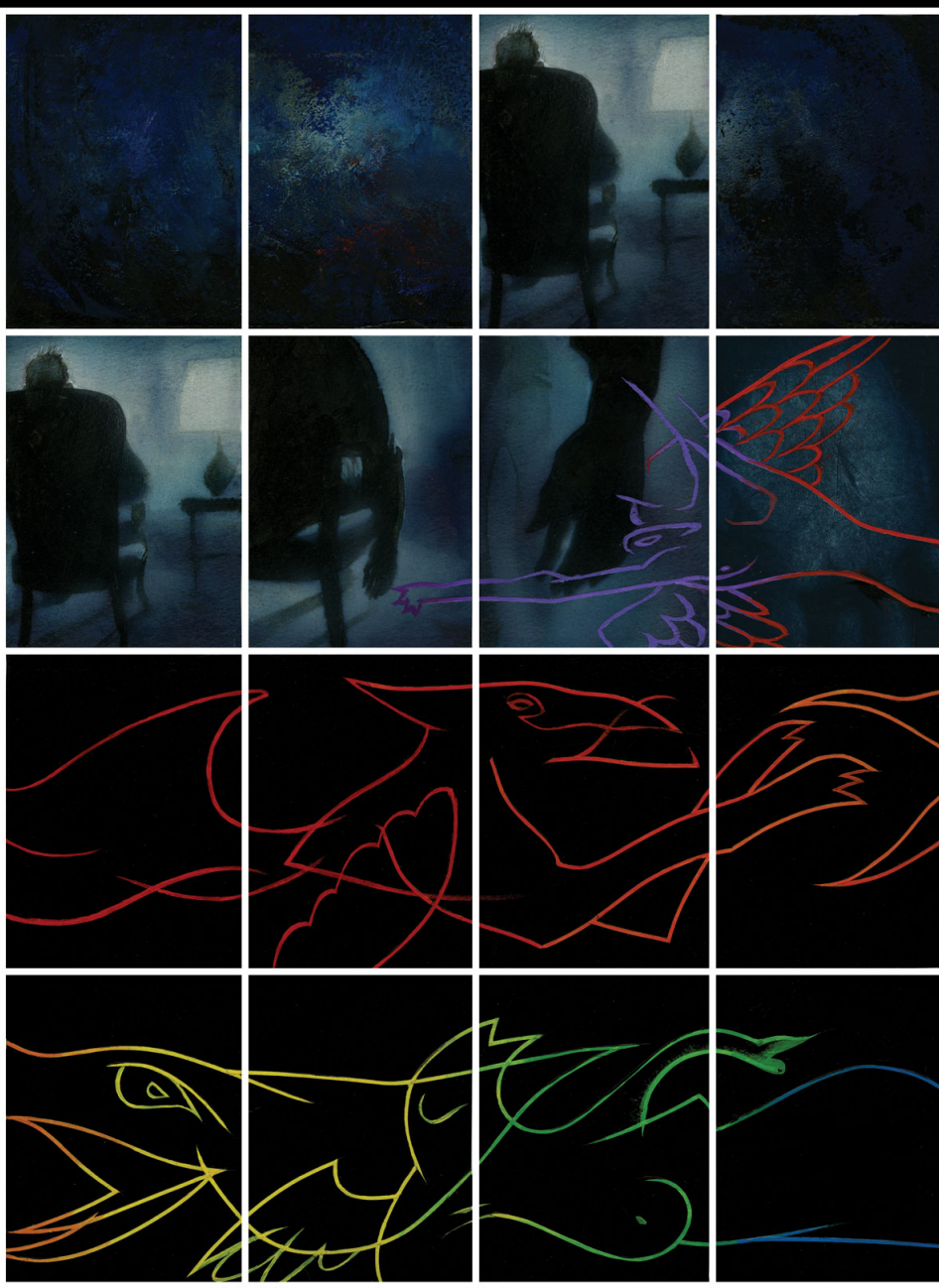


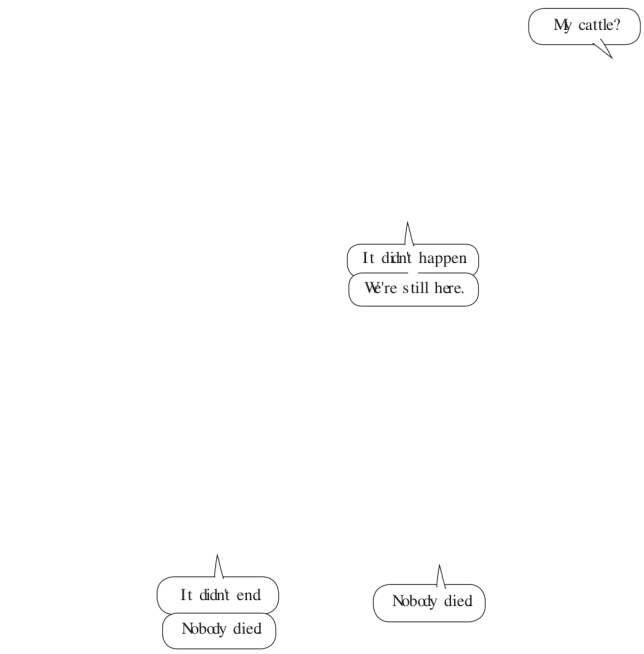


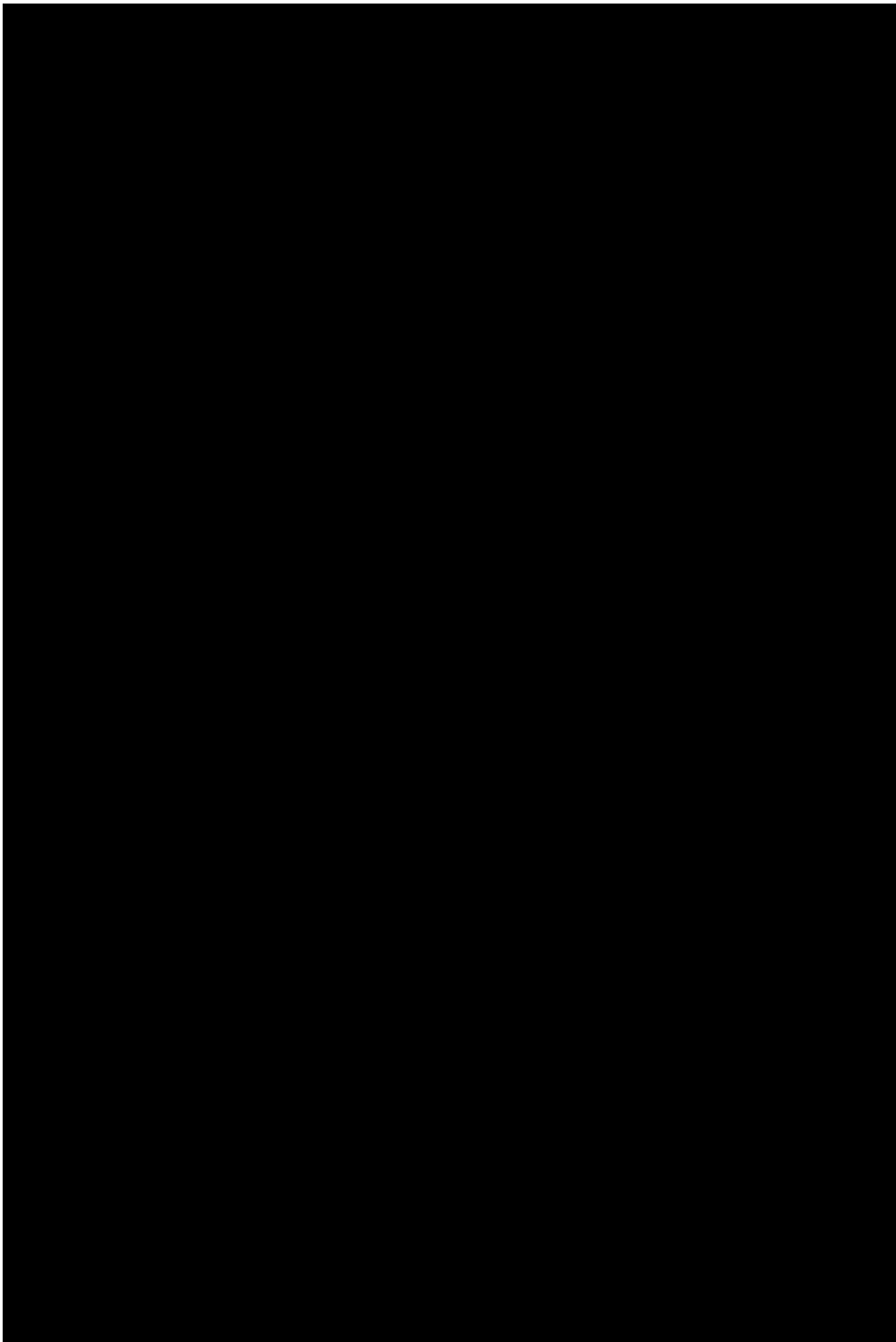


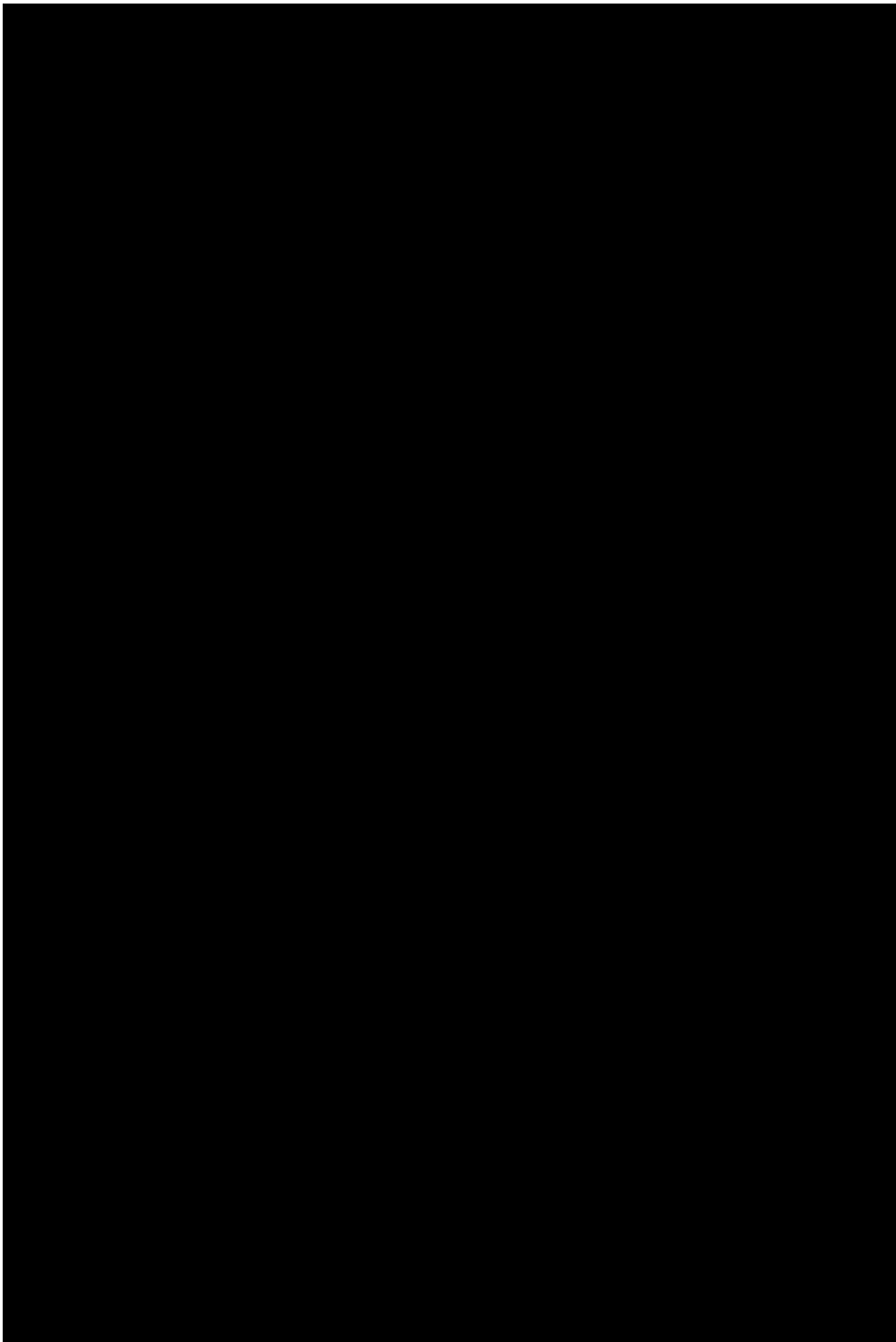


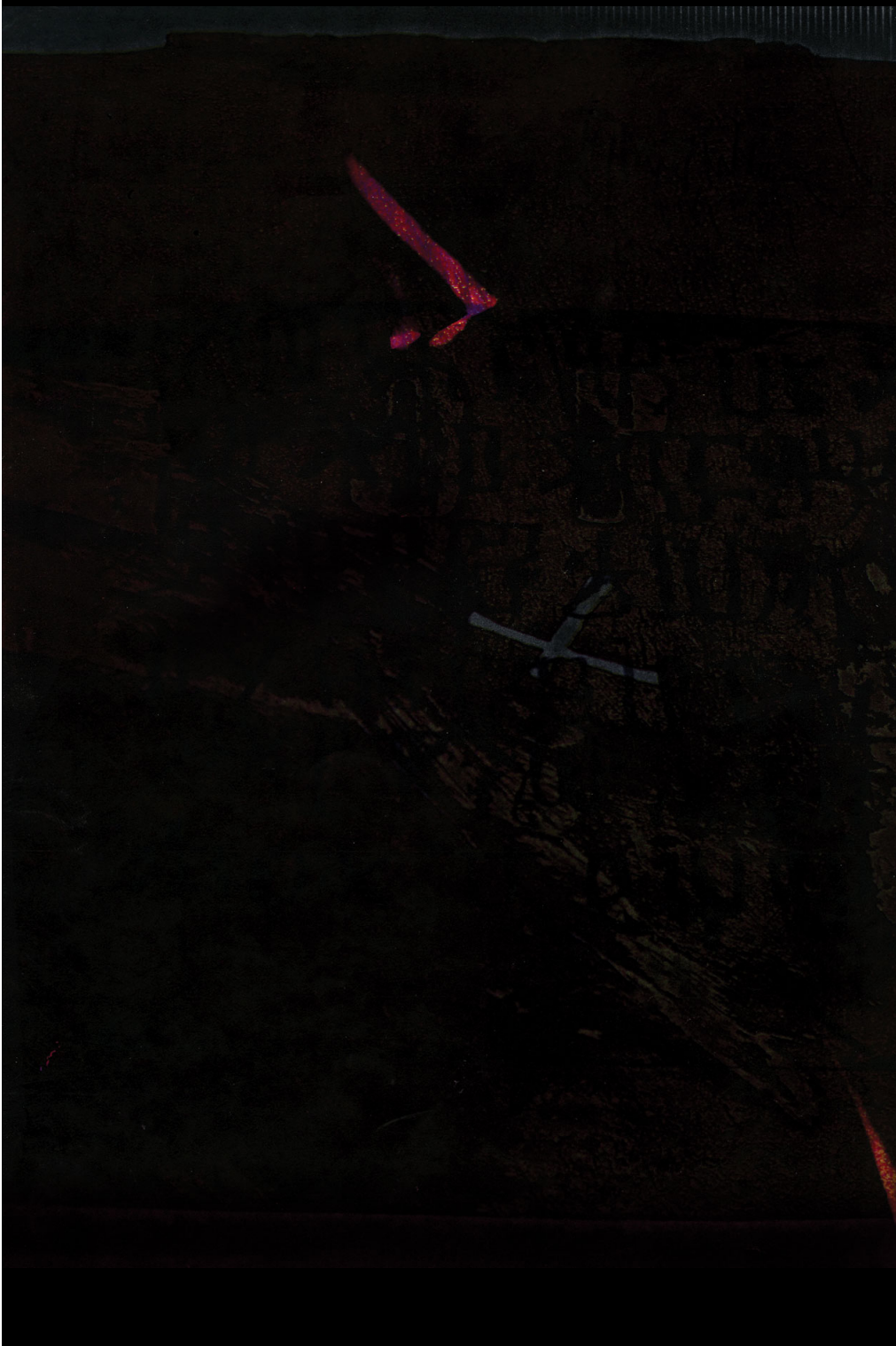


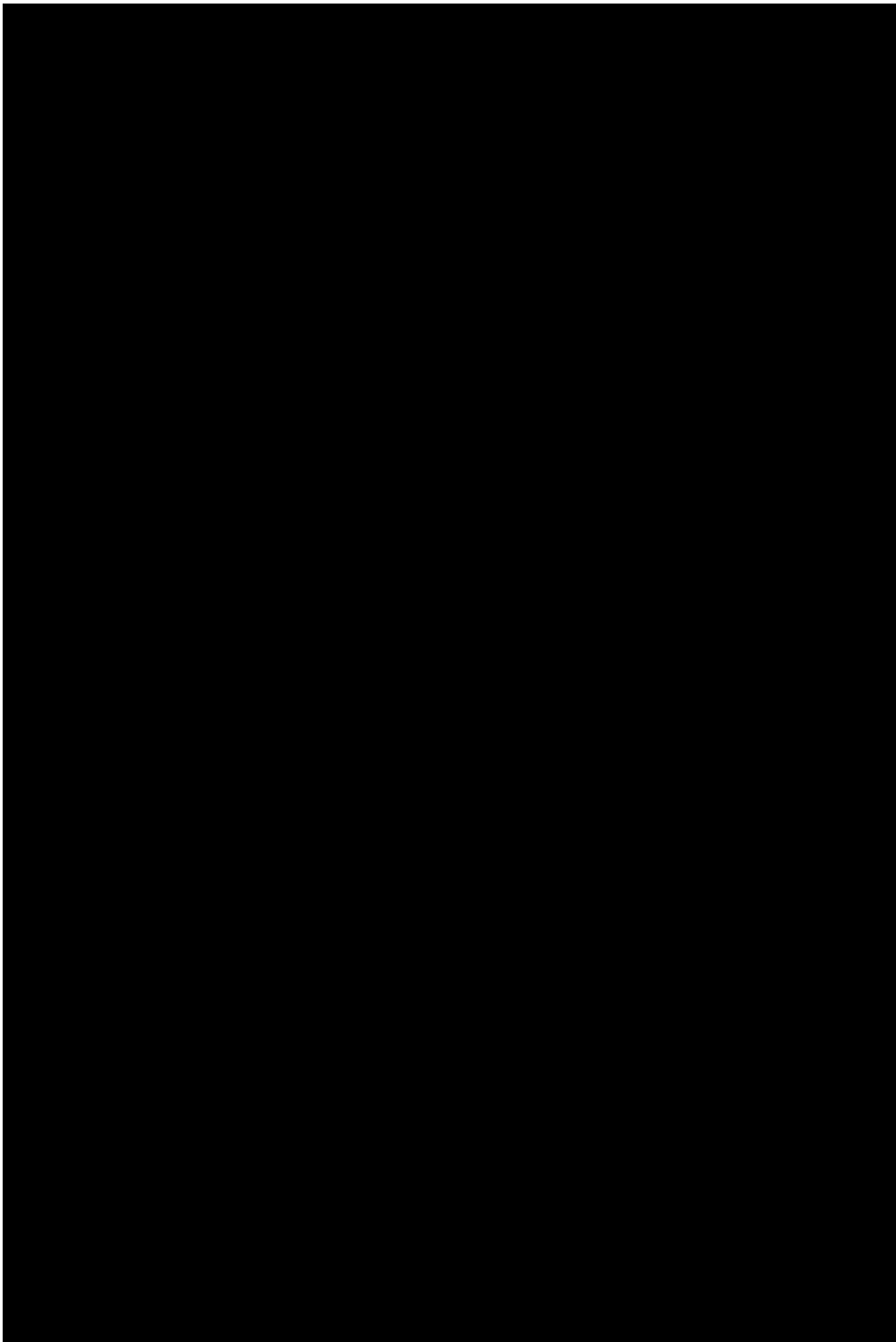


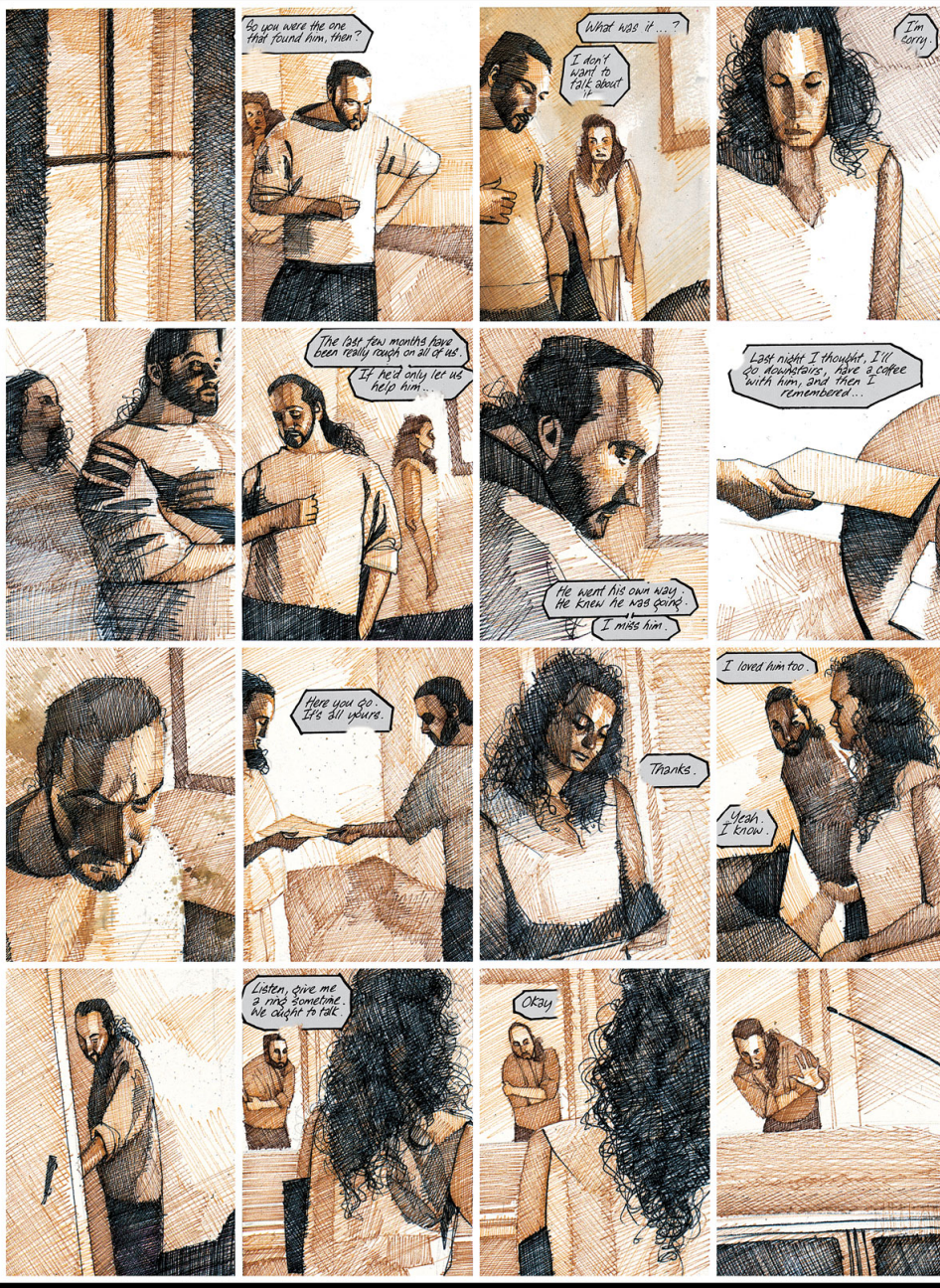

My cattle?
It didn't happen
We're still here.
It didn't end
Nobody died
Nobody died










So you were the one that found him, then?
What was it...?
I don't want to talk about it.
I'm sorry.
The last few months have been really rough on all of us.
If he'd only let us help him...
He went his own way. He knew he was going.
I miss him.
Last night I thought, I'll go downstairs, have a coffee with him, and then I remembered...
Here you go. It's all yours.
Thanks.
I loved him too.
Yeah. I know.
Listen, give me a ring sometime. We ought to talk.
Okay

So you were the one that found him, then?
Uh uh.
What was it...?
I don't want to talk about it.
I'm sorry.
The last few months have been really tough on all of us.
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Last night I thought, I'll go downstairs for a coffee with him, and then I remembered...
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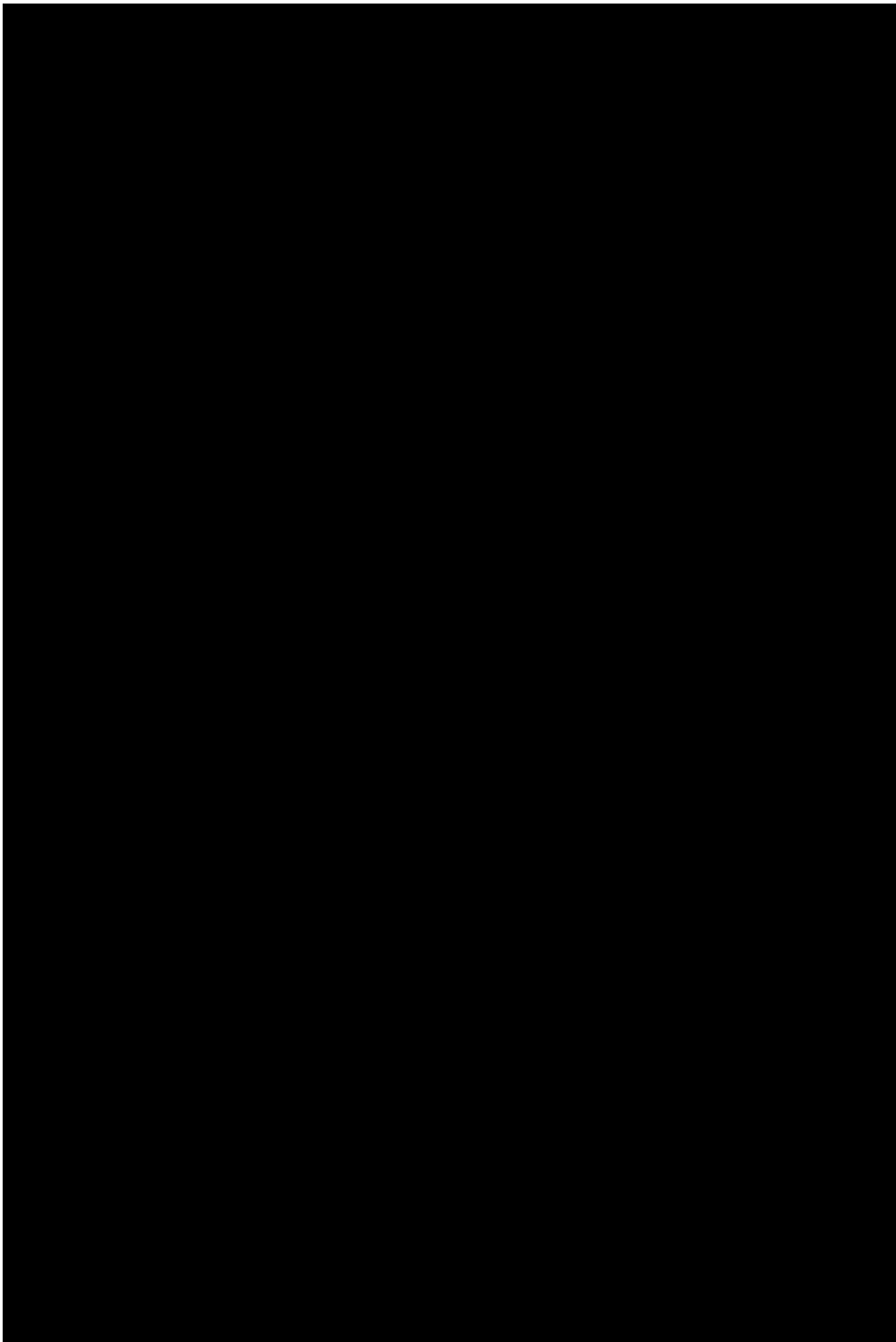

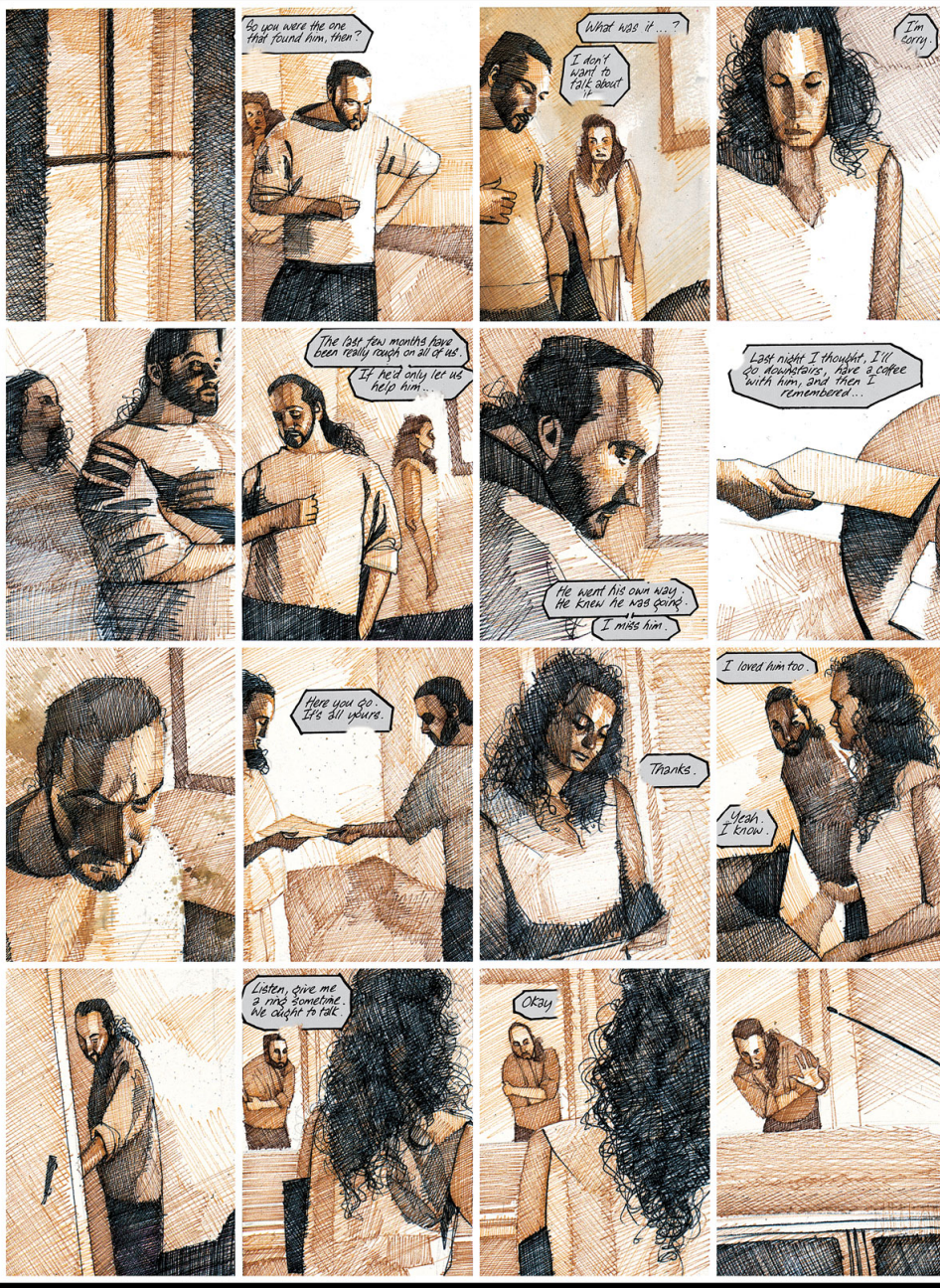
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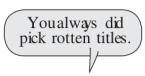
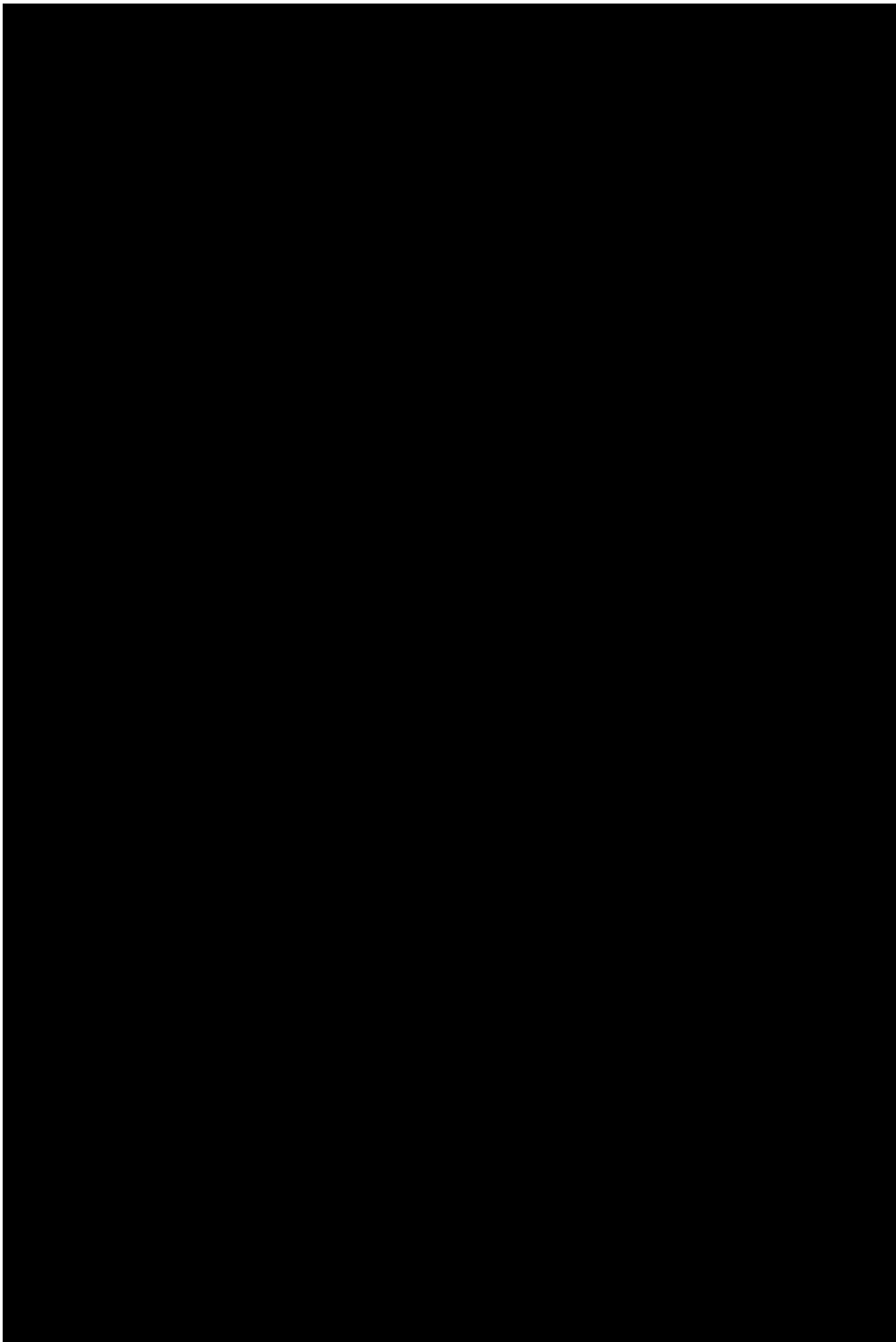
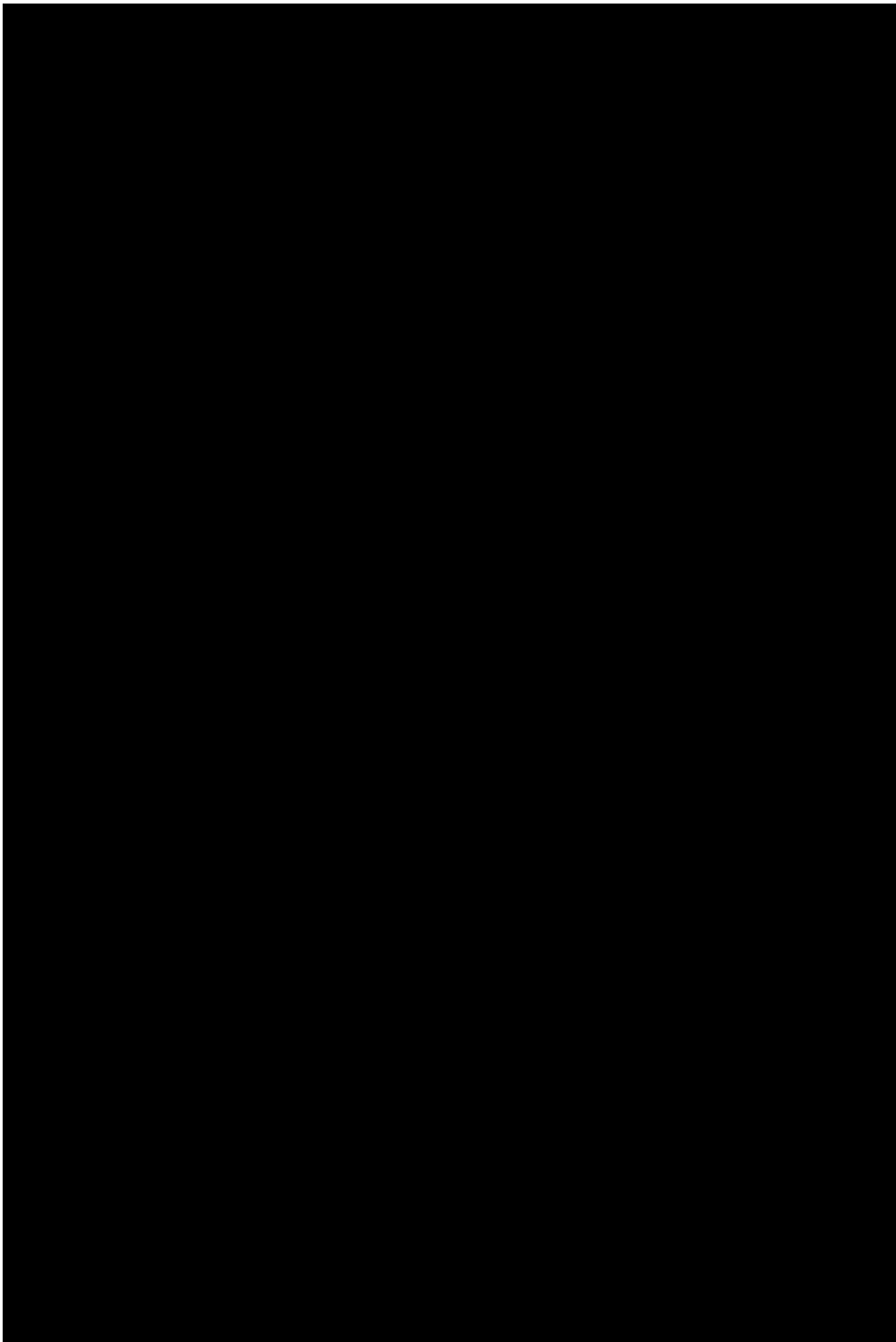

You always did
pick rotten titles.





PRE-CREDITS:

One of them is shouting and we cannot hear the words.

Anno Domini 999, the last day of the last month of the year.

It's winter in middle Europe, a small town in the shadow of a mountain

They are preparing to leave everything they own.

They are looking at the skies.

And they are beginning, slowly beginning, really beginning, to believe…

We pan in slowly: it's like an ant's nest, as they run in circles, gathering up their possessions, food, children.

We see their faces (rich, poor, old, fat, mad).

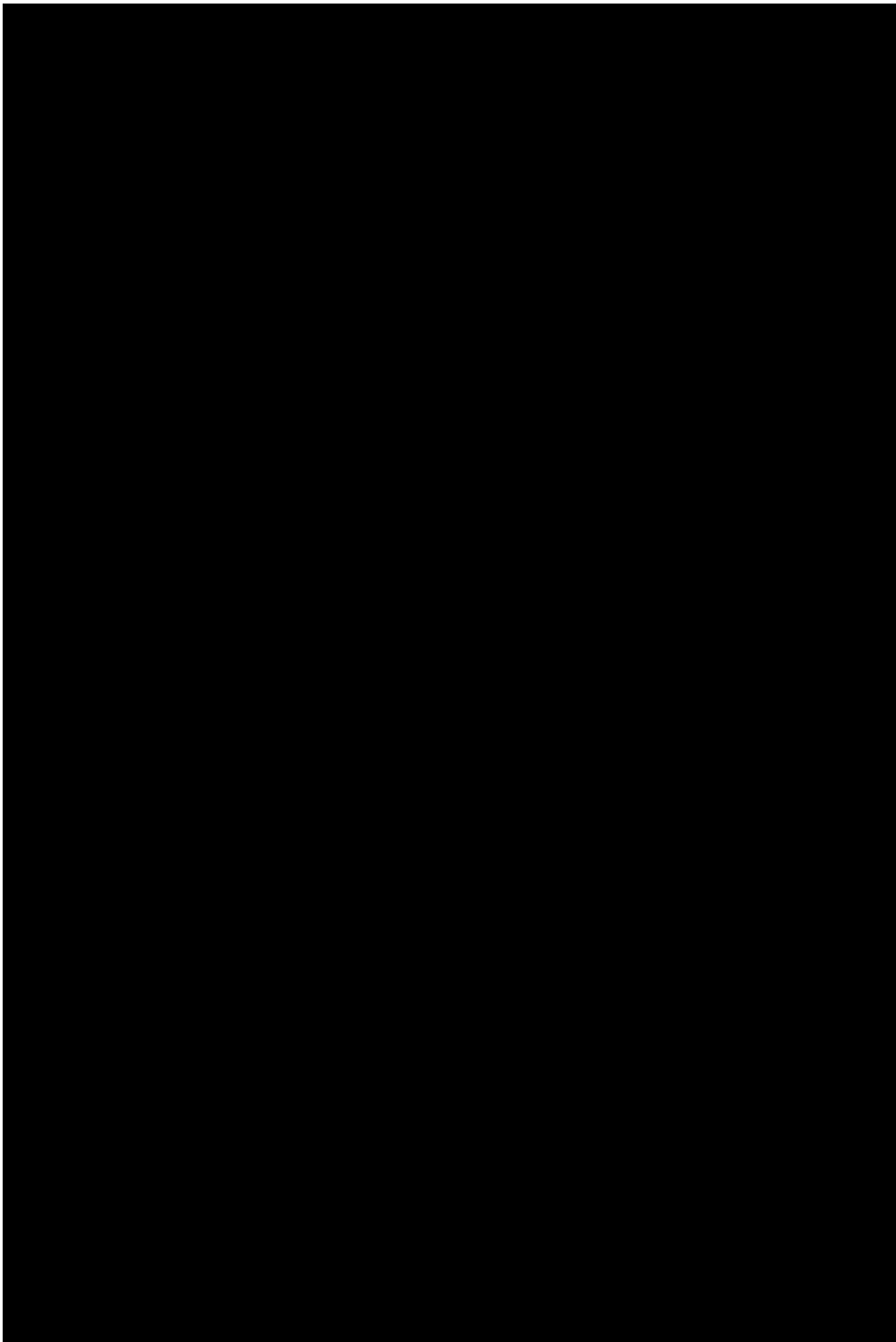
Some stand and scoff, then they, too, begin to be affected by the others, by the utter conviction that at last it's here. That it's coming.

A flurry of snow comes across our vision, like a burst of noise disrupting a frozen video image, and when we can see again they are walking away from us…

Leaving the village.

Going up to the high place.

Waiting for the end of the world.



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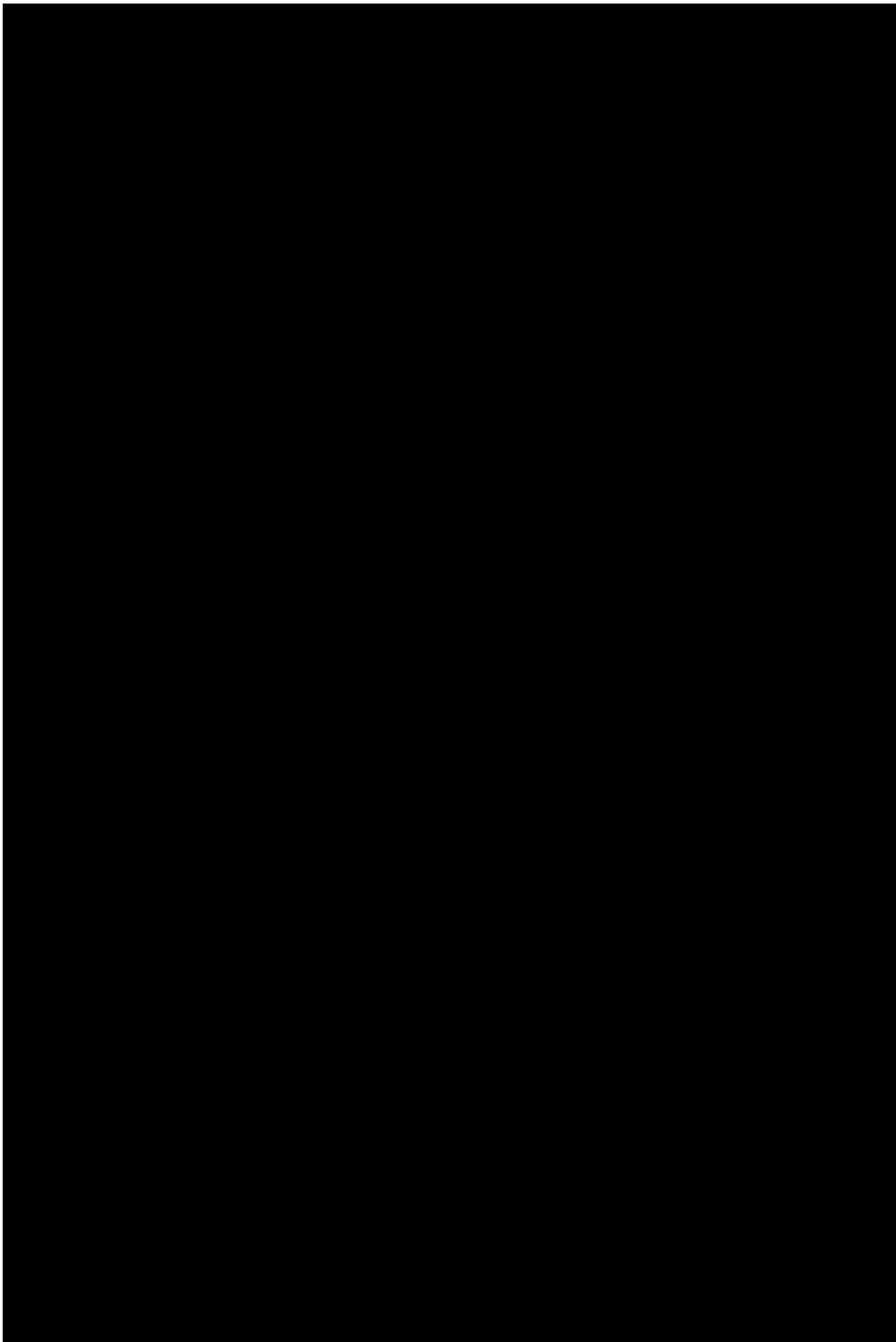
11. MILLENNIU M



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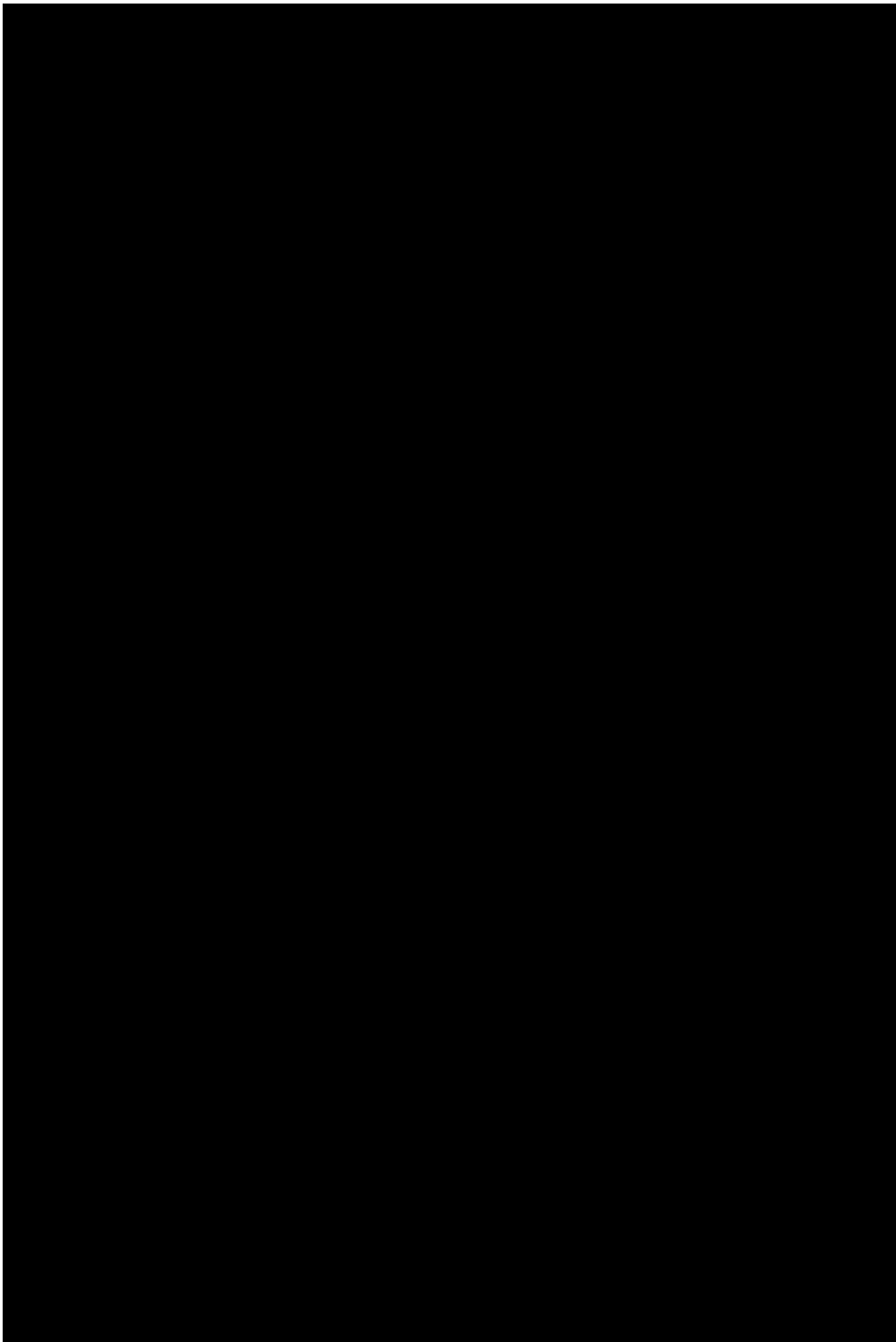
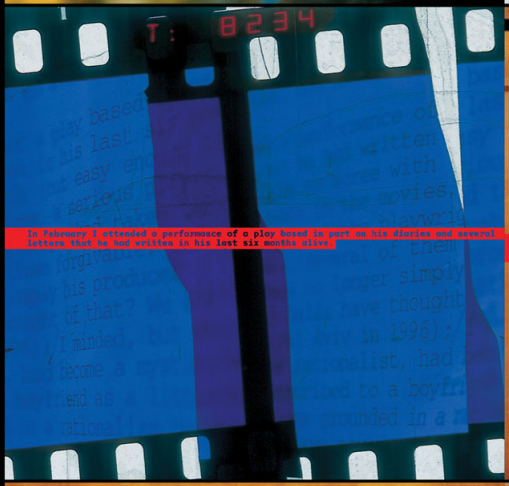


I thought I had put over [illegible] had somehow consigned him to the past: our work was done, the file was shut, the ashes were long since sprinkled, as he had, at the very last, requested, into the Thames, and swept down to the sea.

Last year, however - by which I mean 1999 - it was difficult: he returned from the dead, in a way, and there was no avoiding him. It was his year.



In February I attended a performance of a play based in part on his diaries and several letters that he had written in his last six months alive.

For reasons I found difficu[lt] to agree with (but easy enough to understand having spent fifteen years in the movie[s] a serious player in what they laughingly call the Industry) the playwright had take[n] certain liberties with the world as I once was.

Several of [them] forgivable: I did not mind that I was for dramatic purposes no longer simply his producer - I had become his ex-wife (and what would Galli have thought of that? We shall never know: she died in a car crash in Italy in 1996).

I admired, but only a little, that Terry had the ultimate rationalist, had become a mystic, while my own beliefs (which I once described to a boyfriend as a little bit Sufi, a little bit Zen & a little bit Gnostic) had become grounded in a rationalism to which I have never pretended and to which I have never aspired.

I thought I had got over it, that I had somehow consigned him to the past: our work was done, the film was made, and his ashes were long since sprinkled, as he had, at the very last, requested, into the Thames, and swept down to the sea. Last year, however - by which I mean 1999 - it was difficult: he returned from the dead, in a way, and there was no avoiding him. It was his year.

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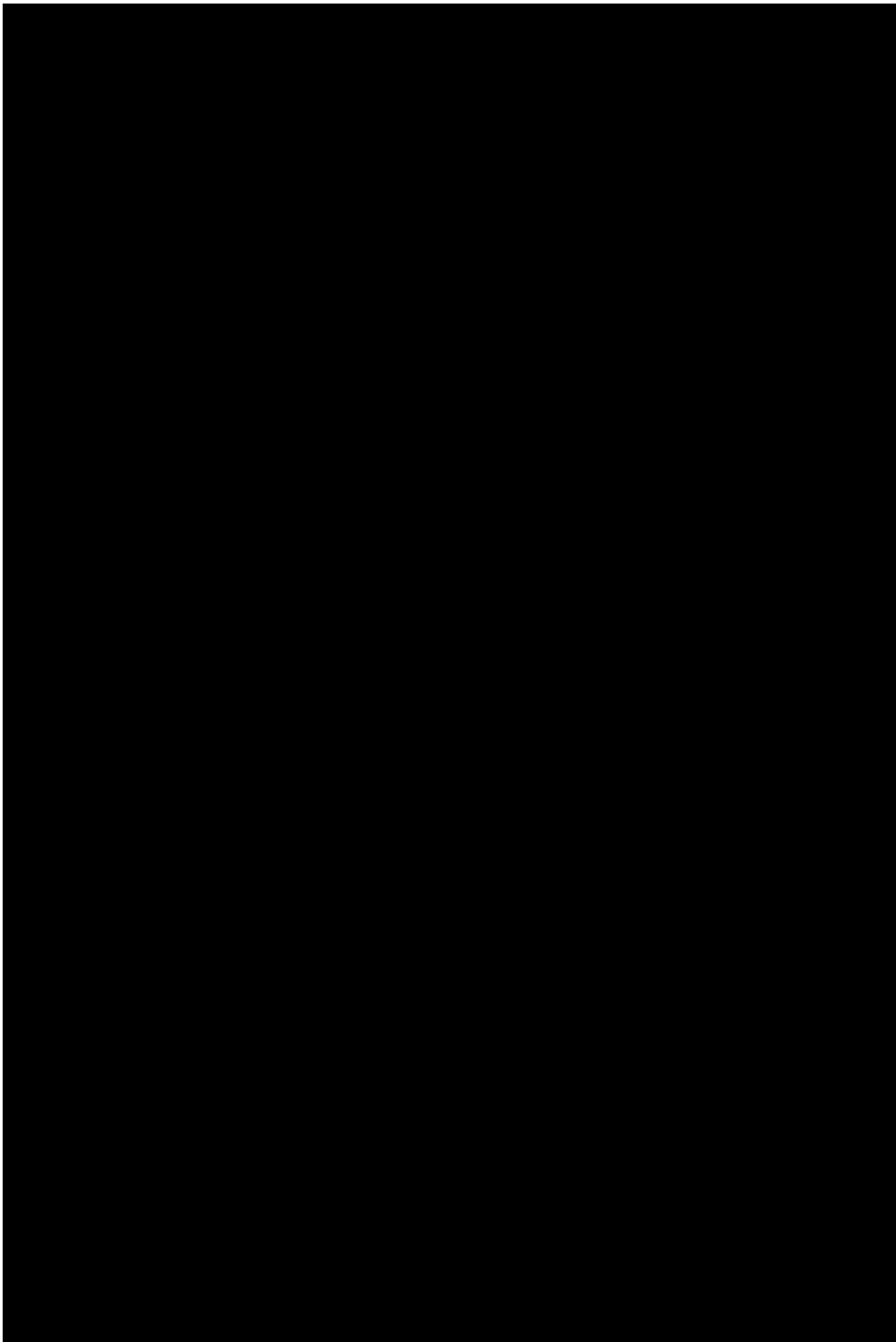

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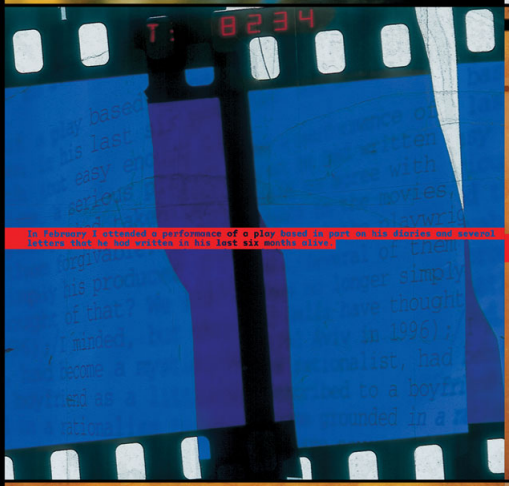

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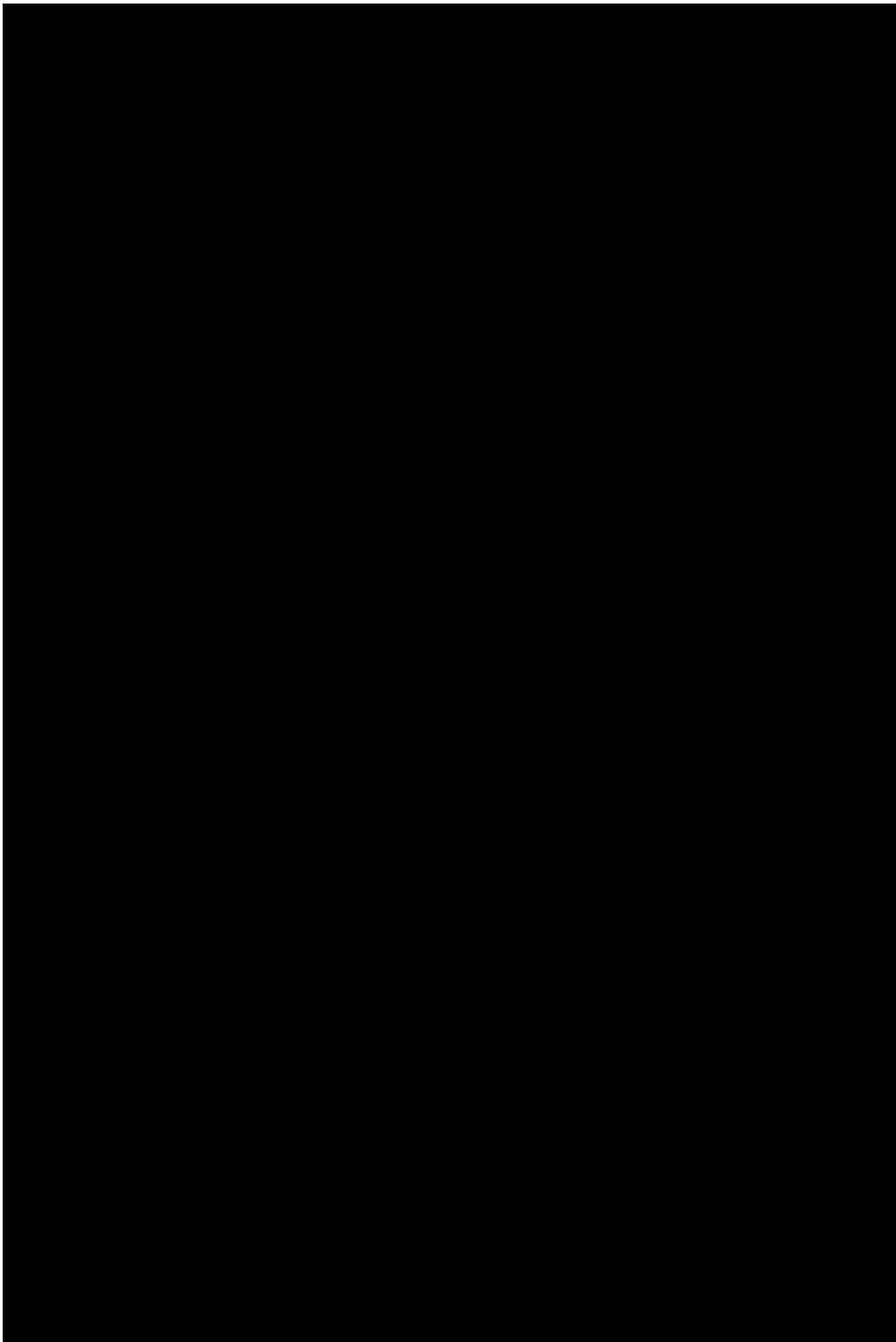
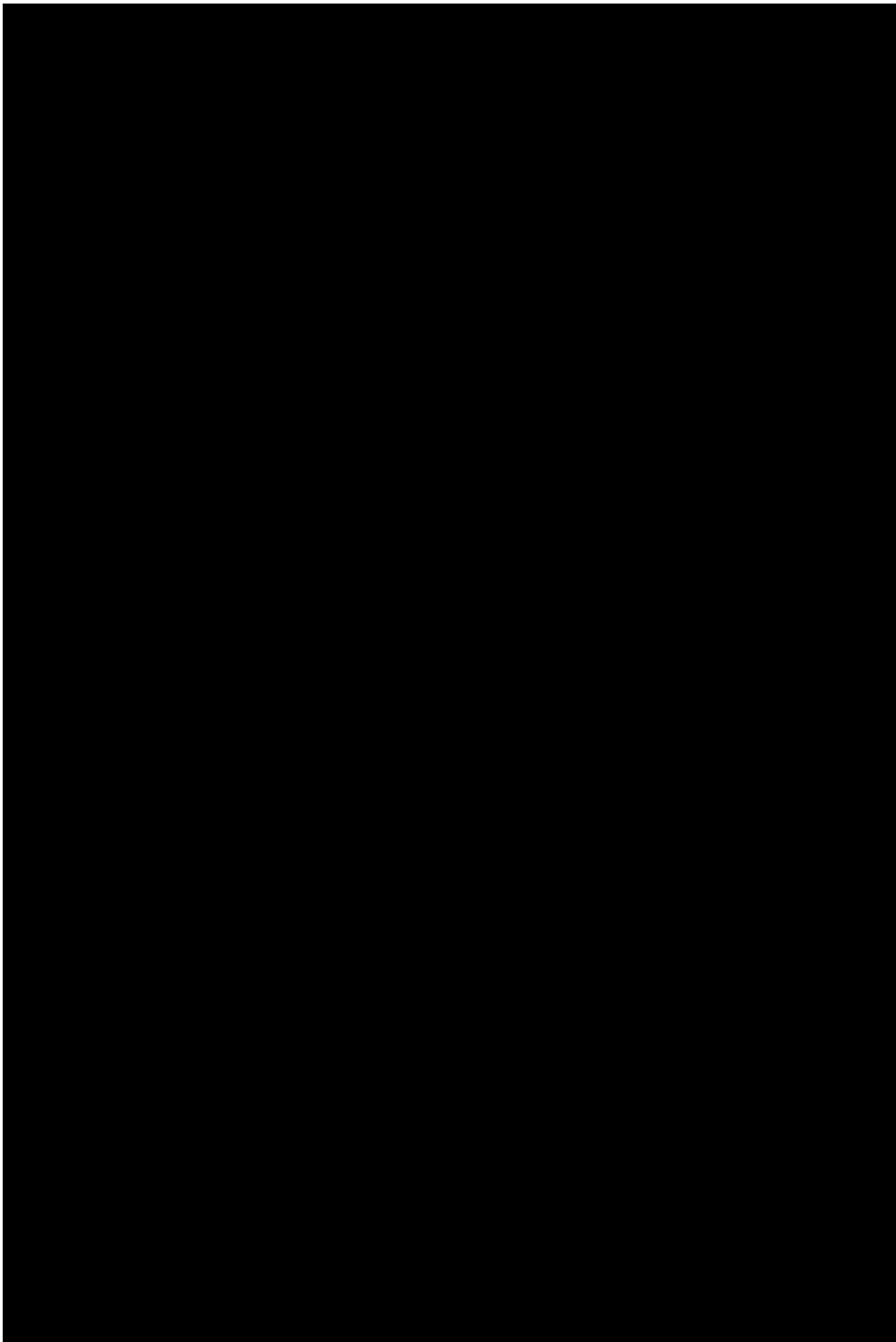
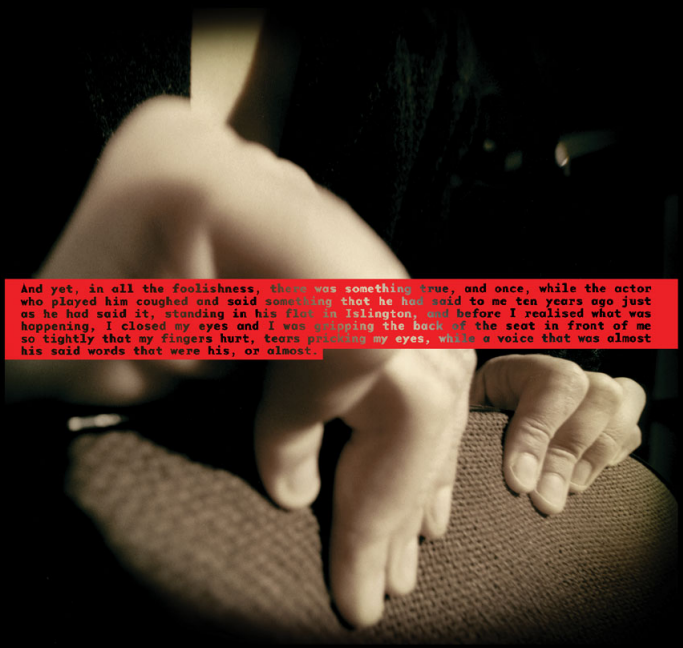
The most unforgivable change was also the most understandable: for copyright reasons, the playwright found herself unable to use any of the original script for Apocatastasis: she invented a last film (called Take It in the End Times, if my memory serves) in which the measured step of the original film had become a strange buffoonery - Carry On to the End of the World.



And yet, in all the foolishness, there was something true, and once, while the actor who played him coughed and said something that he had said to me ten years ago just as he had said it, standing in his flat in Islington, and before I realised what was happening, I closed my eyes and I was gripping the back of the seat in front of me so tightly that my fingers hurt, tears pricking my eyes, while a voice that was almost his said words that were his, or almost.




And yet, in all the foolishness, there was something true, and once, while the actor who played him coughed and said something that he had said to me ten years ago just as he had said it, standing in his flat in Islington, and before I realised what was happening, I closed my eyes and I was gripping the back of the seat in front of me so tightly that my fingers hurt, tears pricking my eyes, while a voice that was almost his said words that were his, or almost.

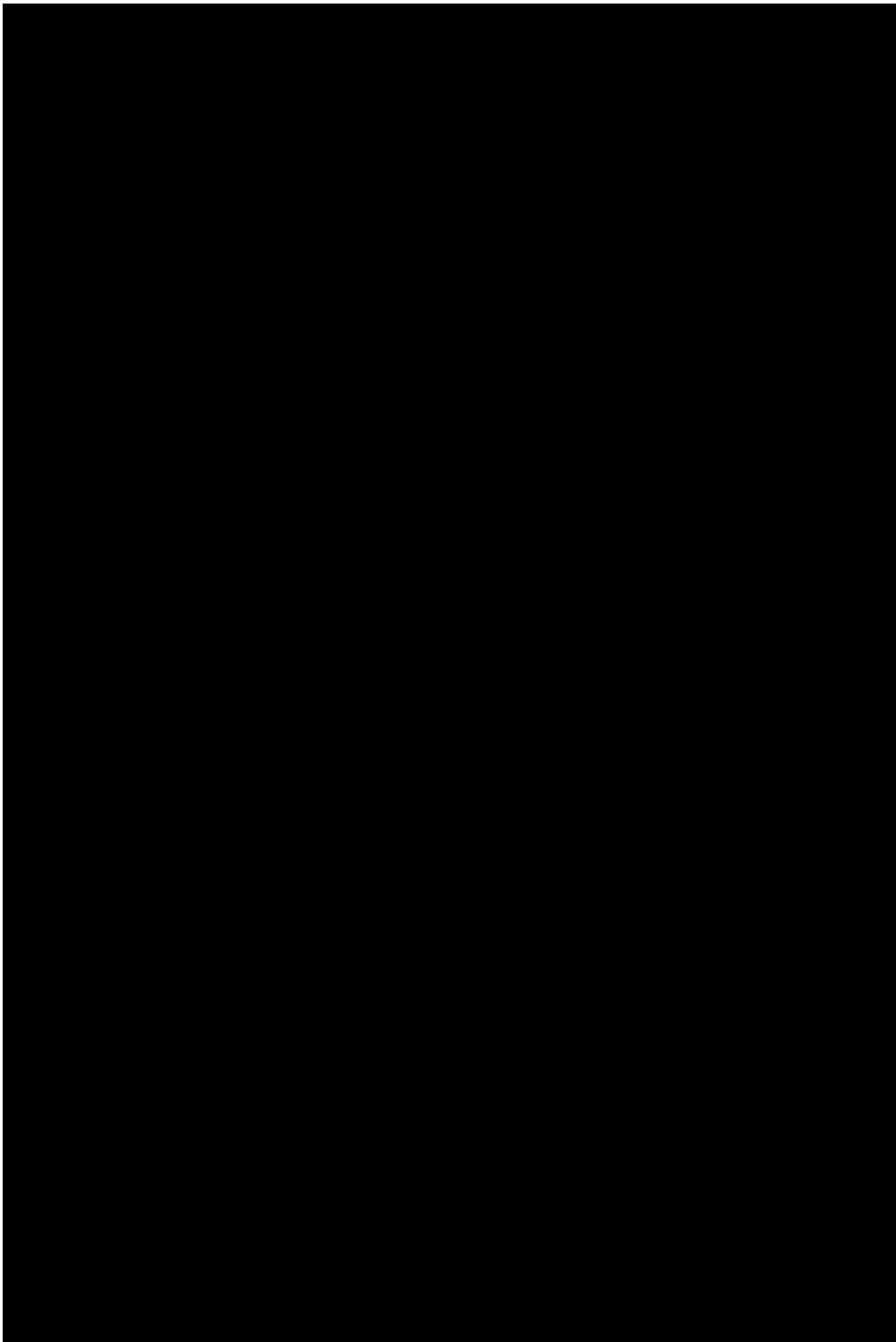
And, afterward, I thought, this is what art is for. It is our only chance to listen to the voices of the dead. And more than that, it allows them to touch us, and it allows us, the living, to learn from them.

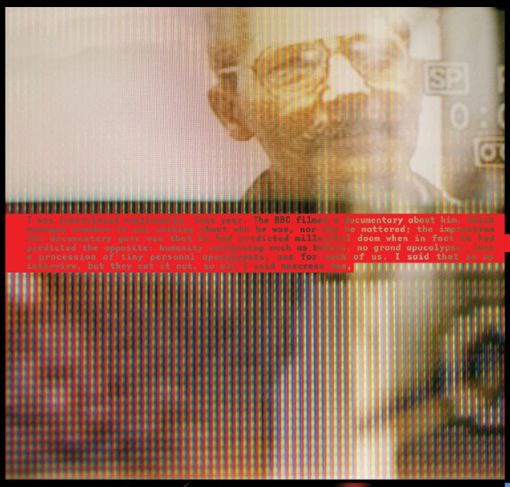
I hated him for dying. Then.
I hated him for giving up.

And as the year continued I heard his name invoked increasingly. At one point I found myself on stage at the NFT, during a season of his films, answering questions from the audience. I remembered that moment from his diaries, where he records a dream in which the audience become ravenous animals, ready to tear him apart. But I answered their questions, nervously, expecting the hard ones -

"Did you ever sleep with him?"
"What kind of a man was he anyway?"
But only getting the easy ones -
"What was he like to work with?"

"What was really in the box the woman carried in Hauptmann's Inferno
And they stayed people all the way, No vultures, no snow leopards,
no dreams.

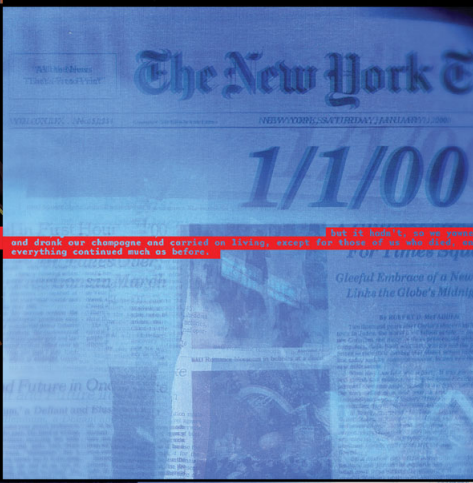




I was interviewed continually last year. The BBC filmed a documentary about him, which somehow somehow never mattered about who he was, nor why he mattered; the impression was that everyone had just predicted millennial doom when in fact he had predicted the opposite: humanity continuing much as before, no grand apocalypse, just a procession of tiny personal apocalypses, one for each of us. I said that a millennium was like a car crash in slow motion, a cold onscreen one.

"He was a very frustrating man. And very complicated."

And then we spun into the millennium, the grand rollover, as the numbers on the dashboards of our calendars clicked from the 999s back to the zeros, and we held our breath, just for a moment, to see if the world had ended.



but it took it as an excuse and drank our champagne and carried on living, except for those of us who didn't, for everything continued much as before.

I was in a bookstore last week. I was looking for something to read, and there, hiding quietly among the other books was a book on "How you can Survive the Impending Worldwide Doom of Dec 31st 1999" - survivalist tips for keeping it going during civilization's impending meltdown.

I picked it up and examined it, and it seemed as ancient and add as if I'd found an Etruscan scroll slipped between the Danielle Steels and t Tom Clancys - a fossil from an earlier time, a fragment or a sherd. We survived. did just fine.

I was interviewed continually, last year. The BBC filmed a documentary about him, which managed somehow to say nothing about who he was, nor why he mattered; the impression the documentary gave was that he had predicted millennial doom when in fact he had predicted the opposite: humanity continuing much as before, no grand apocalypse, just a procession of tiny personal apocalypses, one for each of us. I said that in my interview, but they cut it out, so all I said onscreen was, "He was a very frustrating man. And very complicated."

And then we spun into the millennium, the grand rollover, as the numbers on the dashboards of our calendars clicked from the 999s back to the zeros, and we held our breath, just for a moment, to see if the world had ended, but it hadn't, so we yawned and drank our champagne and carried on living, except for those of us who died, and everything continued much as before.

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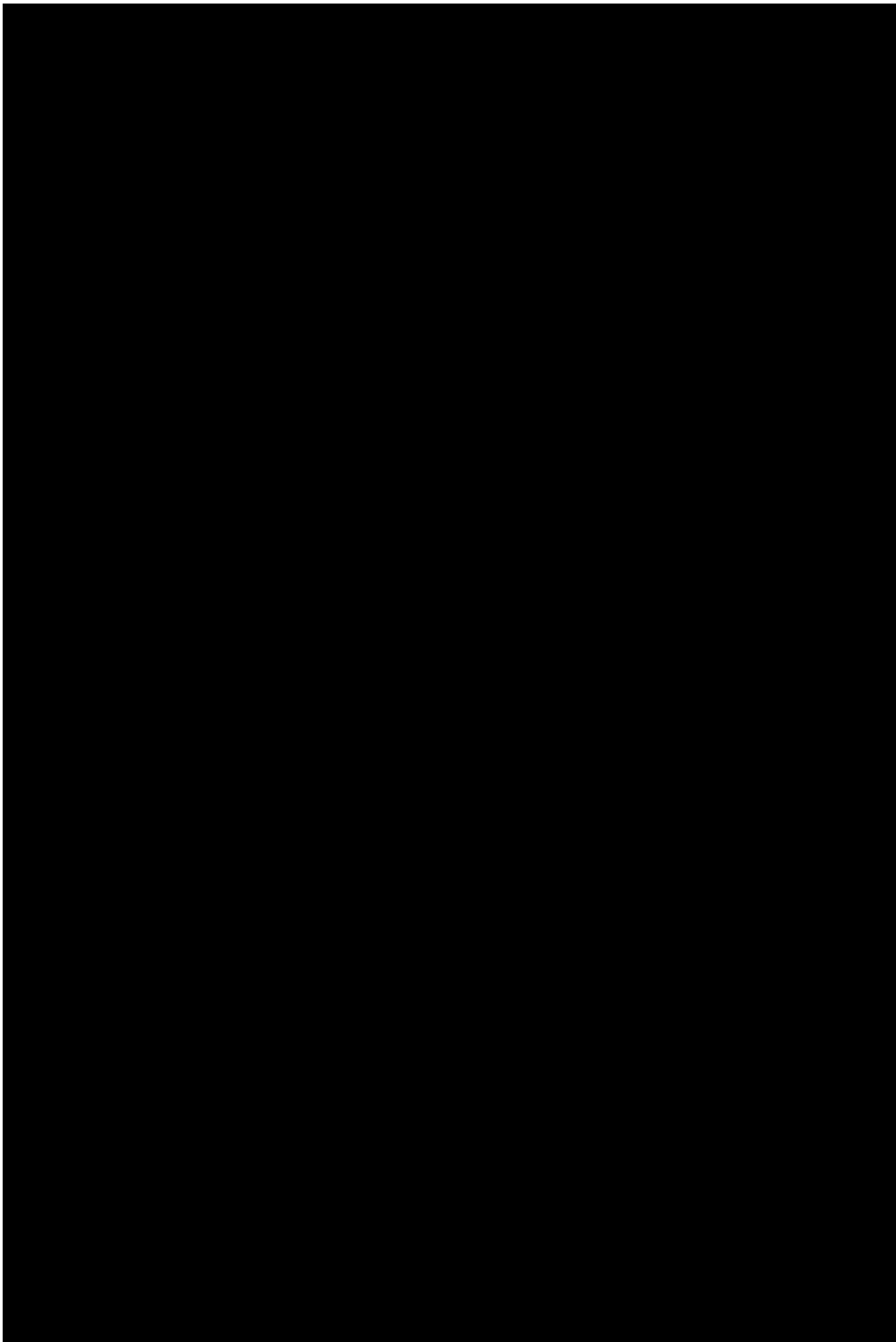

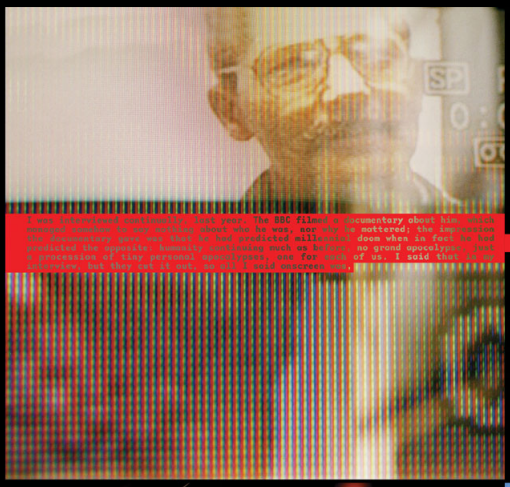

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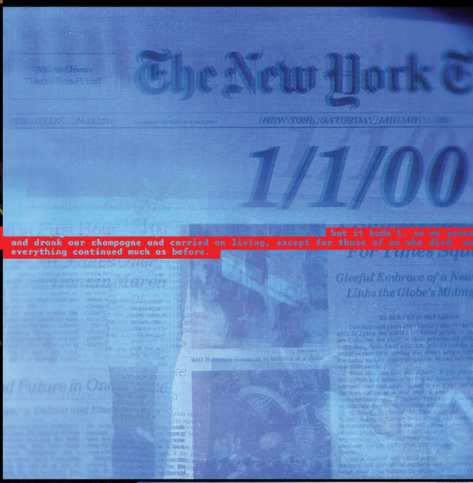

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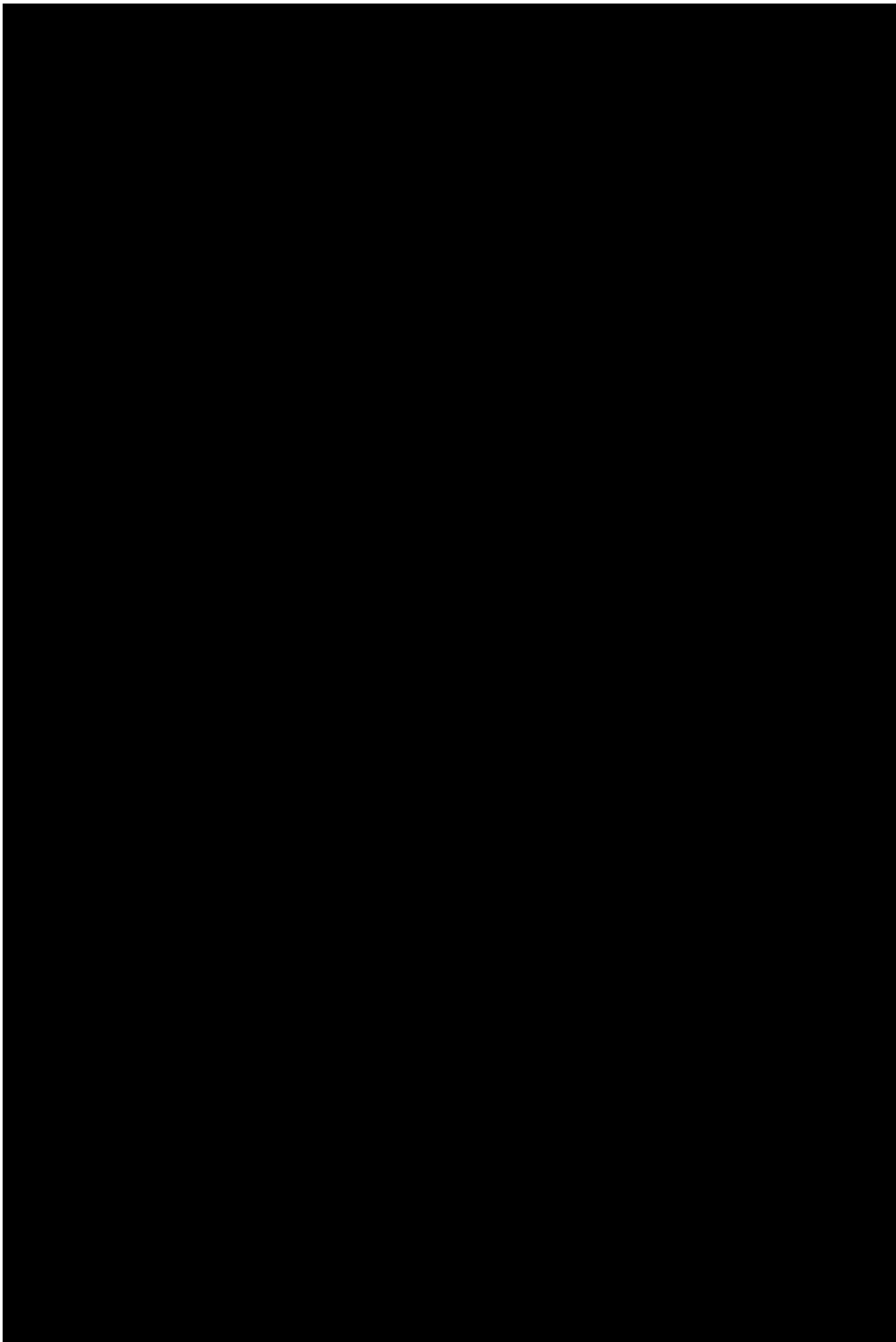
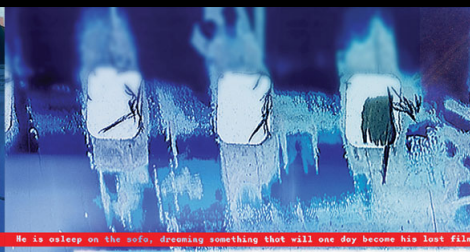
He had called it correctly, as he always called these things. We stumble, but we don't fall, and we pick ourselves up and we keep walkin
- walking on a road that is built from the bodies and the dreams of those who have gone before us.

My mother died last year: tumours in her lungs and brain. She was eighty. The chemo turned her face black and she would tell me, each
day that she woke, she was disappointed, for death, she informed us, would be easier. She took herself off all medication, refused all
treatment, and died soon after. I wondered if she would hold on until the New Year, but she seemed content.

I am not an artist: I am a producer. I make the money happen, make the trucks roll, negotiate
with agents and smooth fragile egos to allow art to happen. I am not an artist, as he was.



But sometime, I can imagine him, six months or thereabouts before the end


He is asleep on the sofa, dreaming something that will one day become his last fil

KODAK 5077

Perhaps they are lookin
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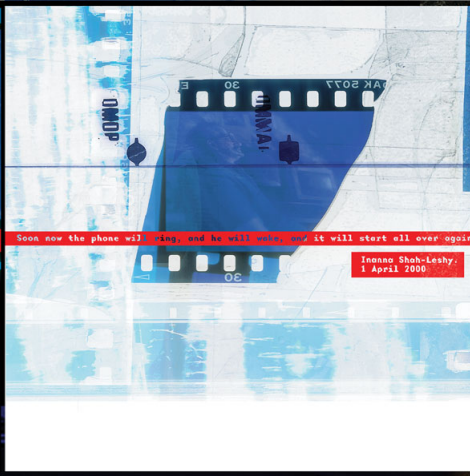
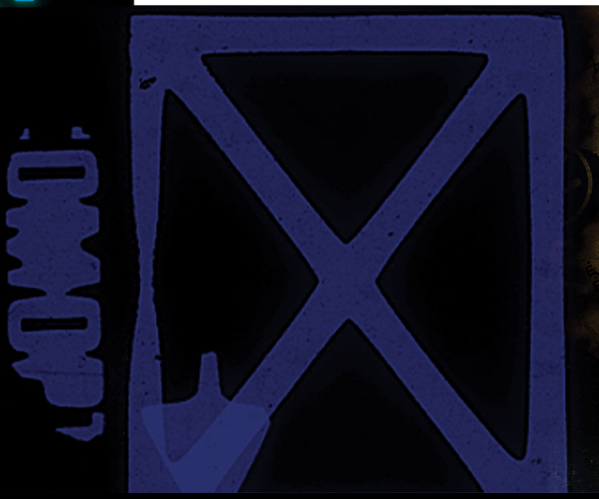
"Perhaps," he thinks to himself, in his dream, "They are looking at the skies. There.
Do you see? One of them is shouting, and we cannot hear the words..."


Soon now the phone will ring, and he will wake, and it will start all over again
Inanna Shah-Leshy.
1 April 2006



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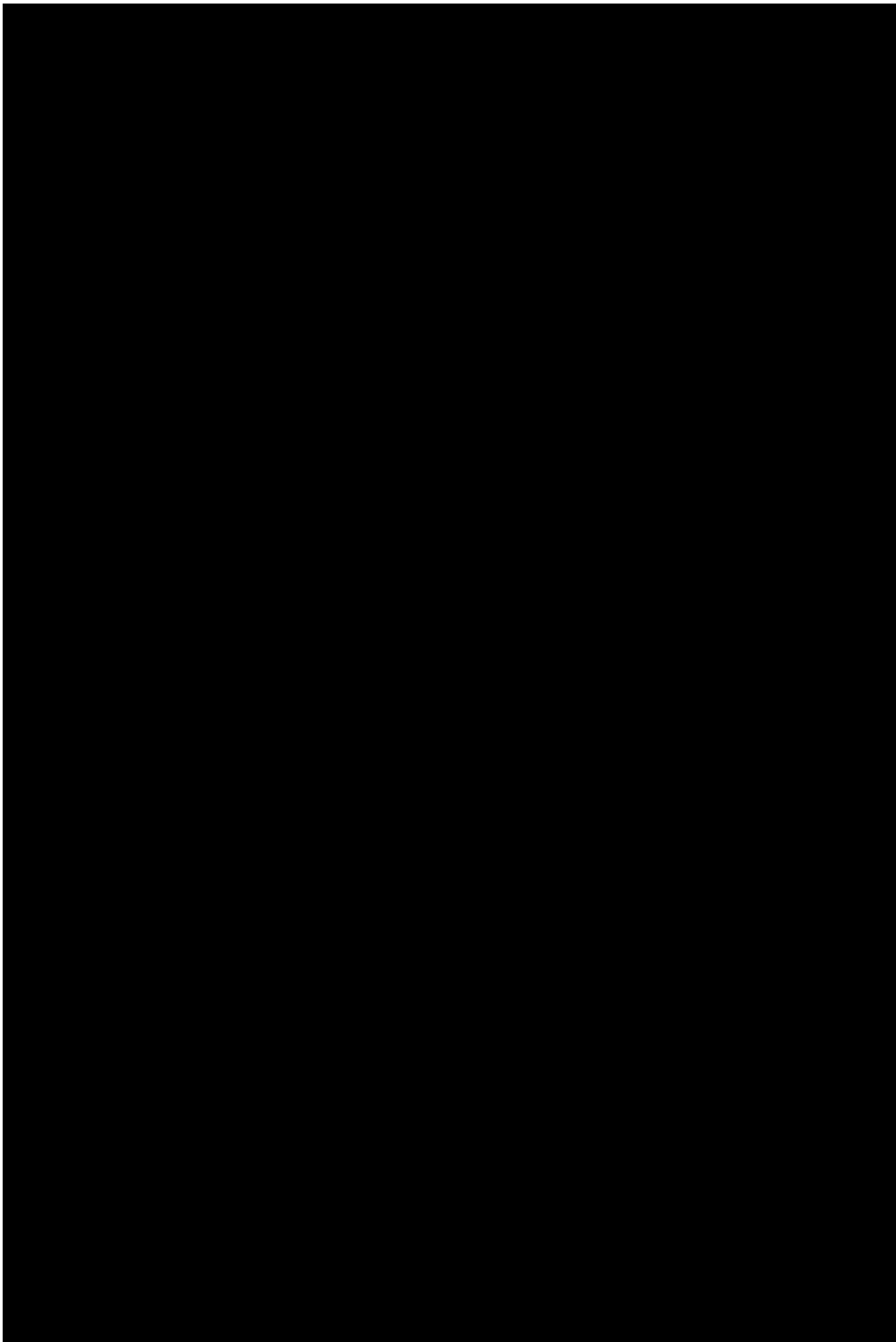

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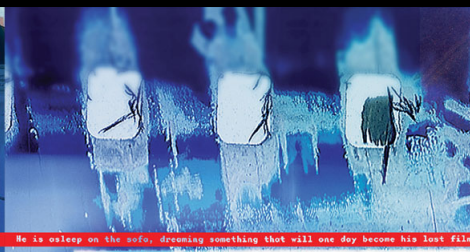
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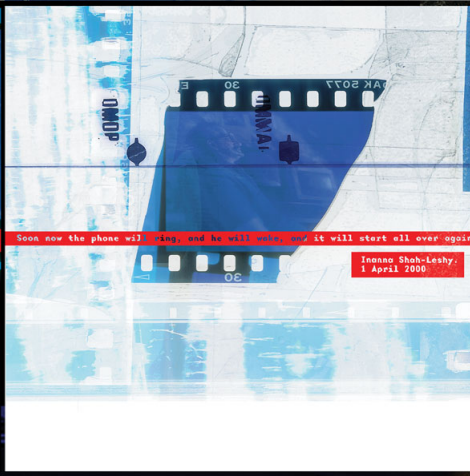
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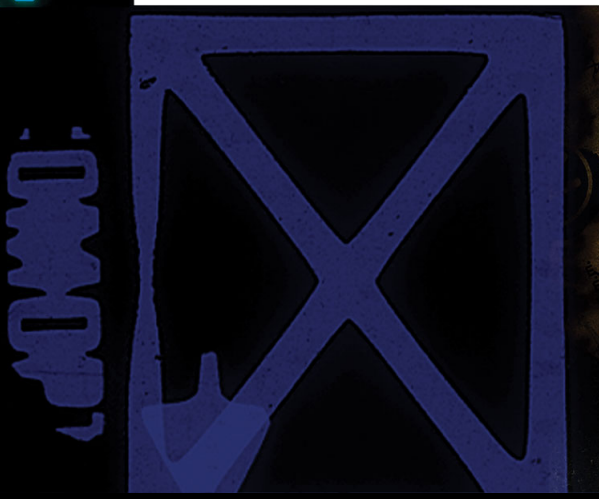

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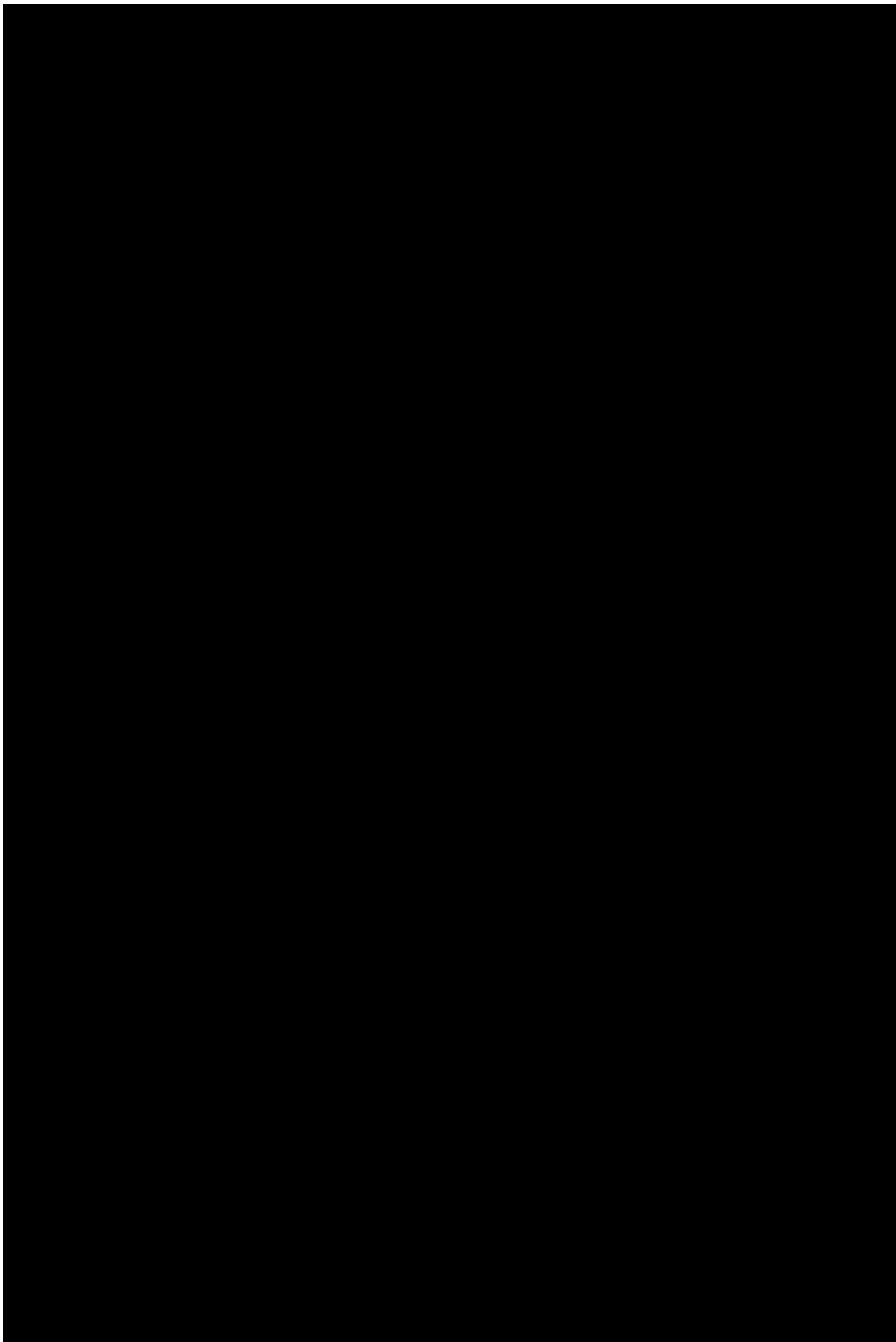

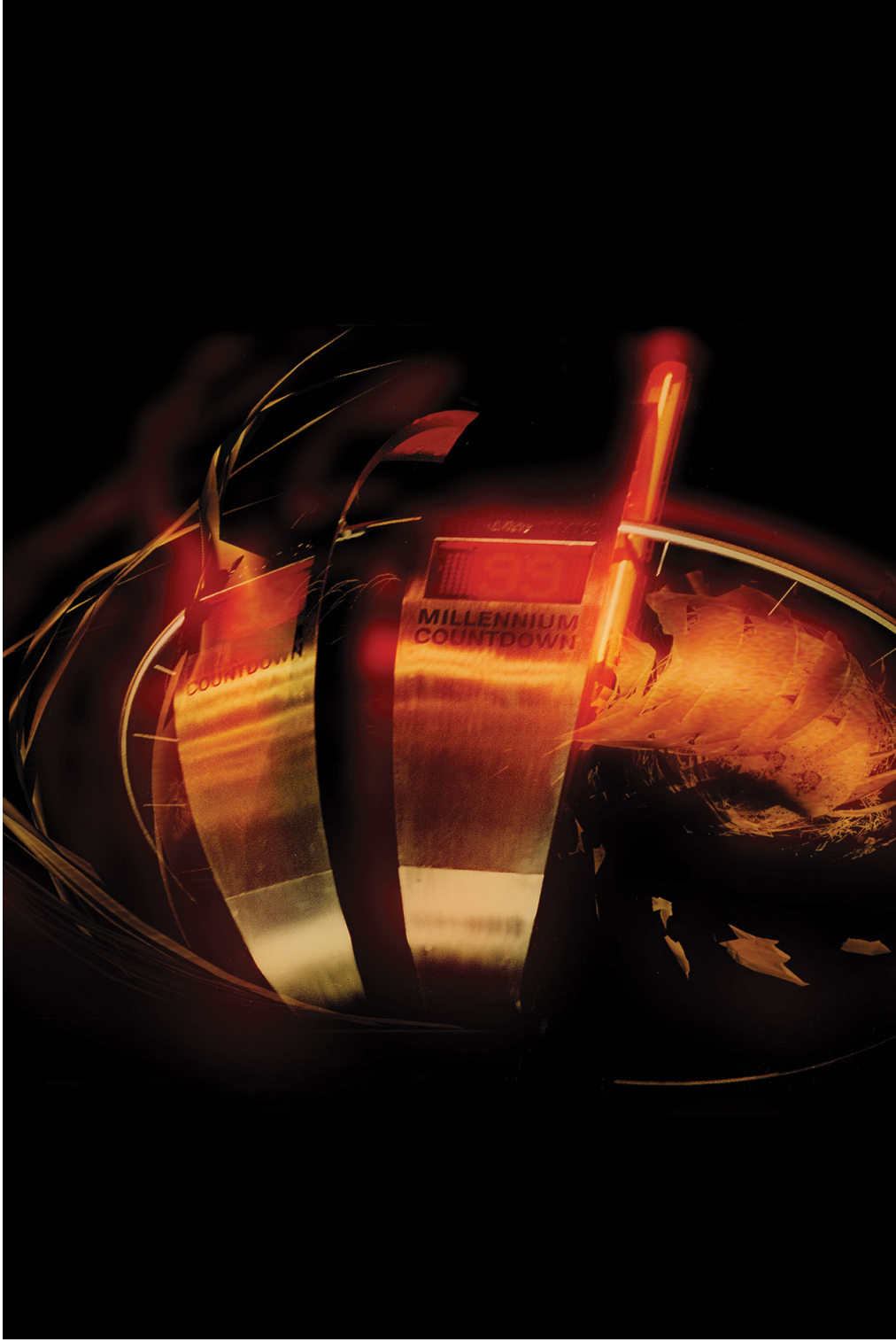
MILLENNIUM
COUNTDOWN